FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

23 JANUARY 1987

### Iran-Iraq War

An Iraqi military statement reported that an Iranian missile hit a densely-populated residential quarter of Baghdad 22 January, resulting in the "martyrdom" of "a number of citizens," Voice of the Masses reported. In other 22 January fighting, Iraqi planes carried out air strikes on the Iranian cities of Pol-e Dokhtar, Khorramabad, Malayer, and Eslamabad-e Gharb, according to a military statement broadcast by Voice of the Masses. The raids were acknowledged by IRNA, which reported resulting casualties of 212 civilian deaths and 644 wounded. At the same time, Iranian jet fighters bombed military and industrial targets in 'Amadiyah and Miqdadiyah, and also inflicted "heavy damage" on areas of Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, Sayyid Sadiq, Halabjah, and Khormal with long-range artillery fire. The Iranians claimed to have downed an Iraqi jet in a 22 January report by Tehran radio, but this was denied by an Iraqi military spokesman, who challenged Iran to "prove its claims," INA reported. In another military development, IRNA reported that in a "fresh thrust" on the western bank of the Jasim River 23 January, ground forces captured unspecified "new positions."

### ICO Developments

Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi said he will not attend the ICO in Kuwait because of Egypt's participation, JANA reported 22 January. Al-qadhdhafi said Egypt's presence at the ICO is "illegitimate" and will turn the entire conference into a "farce." In his opening speech to the ICO Foreign Ministers Preparatory Meeting 22 January, chairman Shaykh Sabah called on Iran to end the fighting with Iraq and respond to the "peaceful initiatives which Iraq has repeatedly declared on many occasions," KUNA reported.

### Syria

Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid paid a brief visit to Damascus 22 January and held a closed meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad, Damascus radio reported. The two leaders reportedly discussed regional issues, current Arab relations, and bilateral ties.

### Israel

"Authoritative sources" in Jerusalem have denied reports that Al Schwimmer was Shim'on Peres' envoy at a recent meeting with Jordan's King Husayn to discuss developing the 'Arava and opening Haifa port for Jordanian goods, *Hatzafe* reported 23 January.

### Lebanon

Waite Negotiations — The Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy Terry Waite is reportedly continuing his negotiations with kidnappers of the U.S. hostages in Al-biqa', Voice of Lebanon reported 23 January. "Informed sources" cited by the radio say two of the hostages, Terry Anderson and Thomas Sutherland, could be released as a result of his efforts. However, Hizballah sources ruled out the possibility that the hostages would be freed, the radio noted.

Abduction of German Nationals — Two more FRG nationals were reported to have been kidnapped in West Beirut 23 January, Voice of Lebanon reported. Meanwhile, a 22 January Hamburg DPA dispatch said FRG hostage Rudolf Cordez is "alive and well" according to a "reliable source" in Bonn. The report also confirmed reports that FRG Siemens technician Alfred Schmidt has been kidnapped. In a related development, four FRG Embassy staff members traveled to East Beirut under the protection of internal security forces personnel, Voice of Lebanon reported 22 January. The radio cited "sources" as saying the FRG told Cordes' kidnappers through a mediator that it is ready to negotiate. The same "sources" said the kidnappers' first condition is for the FRG to promise not to extradite suspected Shi'ite terrorist Muhammad 'Ali Hamadi to the United States.

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## Text of Rajiv Gandhi's Press Conference

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[Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's press conference at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi — live]

[Text] [Reporter]: Prime Minister, sir, you have been very liberal in distributing packets of central aid to Haryana, Kerela, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and other states. You have, sir, any proposal to come to the rescue of the Punjab government so that the costs of the state barely [word indistinct] could stabilize which will indirectly solve the terrorist problem?

[Gandhi]: As I understand the question, you are asking whether we are giving Punjab enough economic assistance.

[Reporter]: Yes.

[Gandhi]: Almost the entire plan of the Punjab is financed by the center. Punjab's own contribution is very very meager. There is very little more we can do than the finance the whole plan.

[Kaul]: Balbir Kaul from *Financial Express*: Mr Prime Minister, do you propose to do anything concrete on Punjab in addition to holding high level meetings and expressing grave concern, which you normally do following every major violent incident in Punjab?

[Gandhi]: Under the Constitution as it exists today, there is very little that the center can do directly in Punjab. This question came up toward the tail end of the last parliament session when certain incidents happened in Punjab. We had a long debate. Many opposition parties said that the center should do something. During the debate — it was very heated — and even during the debate I asked them what they recommended we do under the Constitution. Then the morning after that I had a meeting again with all of them, and each and every one without exception said that the only action that was possible was president's rule. There was no intermediate position whether center could do something. The only option we had was on 249 [Article of the Indian Constitution], which had been cleared by the Rajya Sabha, but we were having certain administrative problems with 249 vis-a-vis this particular subject in Punjab, and we have not been able to smoothen those out and this too was discussed with the opposition and again all of them agreed that 249 should not be applied.

Now there were a few, perhaps, I think one party who thought that president's rule should have been applied at that stage. But everyone else said no and we also on our own thought that we should not have put president's rule at that stage. So, the question really is not of what the center can do, but when is the right time for the center to take action and put in president's rule. We don't think the time is ripe yet. The unfortunate part is that the killings since approximately, I think September last year, have increased very substantially. They had gone down from about June to September; there was a very steady decline, and it's gone down to [a] very low level. Unfortunately, somewhere around September, end of September, this has started going up again, and they have reached a very serious proportion. I don't know how long we can carry on just watching this happening.

Punjab government must take much more serious and tougher action. Last meeting I had with the chief minister, Mr Barnala, I raised these various points. I gave him a number of points, which I thought needed sorting out, and I asked him to talk with one or two of my senior ministers to sort out these points. Unfortunately, he was not feeling very well that day, was little indisposed, and he wanted to go back to Chandigarh but I hope he is coming back soon to discuss these points. The points I had raised were, well, obviously the first point was the number of people being killed in Punjab and two or three aspects of, recent aspects of the killings. For the first time we have seen women and children as targets. This had not occurred before and this is a new turn. Again there has been another turn of killings which are aimed against the administration and those who have been taking action against the terrorists. This also is a new turn. So, with special emphasis on these two aspects, but of course killings as a whole, I had asked him to tell us what he is going to do to bring them under control.

Then, I have also told him that it is not adequate to try and look at the problem only as a cut-and-dry terrorist problem. It has to be seen in the wider perspective and it has to be tackled at many levels, including his party, including the what is happening in the SGPC [Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee], what is happening in the Golden Temple. Again, in the Golden Temple we have seen there has been a — although there had been a very substantial decline in terrorist activity there — now again we find after the SGPC election, again we find the terrorist activities on the increase; arms being kept in the temple are on the increase and specific action is to be taken. [sentence as heard] You cannot evade this issue.

Then I told him the next point we needed to talk about was the accord. And here I think I should, because a lot has been said about the accord, I will take this opportunity to just say a few words about the Punjab accord, perhaps the other accords as well because it has been made out that none of them are being implemented and nothing is happening.

Now in the Punjab accord there are 11 points. The first point, compensation to innocent persons killed, [as heard] has been completed. Army recruitment has been done, second point. Third point, involvement in the November incidents. The Justice Ranganath-Mishra Commission was set up and the report is with us. We will be laying the report on the table of the House the beginning of the next session. Fourth was rehabilitation of those discharged from the Army. This has been done to the extent that we are willing to do it. Five, All India Gurdwara Act, this is not pending with us. The action that we have to take, we have taken. We had to write to all the state governments and the SGPC. We have written to all the state governments and the SGPC. We have not received a response from any one, not even the SGPC. Disposal of pending cases, this has been done. Territorial claim, seven, this is a contentious one, which has got stuck.

Now, I would like to read out some points from this which need clarification: 7.2, this is the one that got stuck with the various commissions. Now there are certain things written in 7.2 and we cannot forget these items. It says, first the principle of continuity, linguistic affinity, and village as a unit will be a measure. But it

also says that this will be distinct from the claims which the other commission referred to in 7.4 as looking at.

Now the other commission in 7.4 is looking at the existing Punjab-Haryana boundaries. So the terrorities which are to be exchanged in lieu of Chandigarh cannot be those territories which are there in 7.4 as other claims and counterclaims to readjustments of the boundary. These have to be different from those. It also says in 7.3 that the actual transfer of Chandigarh will take place simultaneously as a territory. Now we cannot ignore half the points that are put down here and do half. And here it also says that these findings will be binding on both sides as says so in 7.2.

Now we are stuck because the Punjab government is not willing to go by what the commission has said. We are willing to go with the commission today. Item eight, center-state relations, everything has been carried out. Item nine, is with (Iradi) commission; his report is due any time now. Except in last para [paragraph] in nine, which is the construction of [name indistinct] canal, which Punjab government has not carried out. Number 10 is representation of minorities. All actions have been completed. Number 11 is promotion of the Punjab language. All actions have been completed.

Then there is a para at the end which I would like to read out to you because it says: This settlement brings to an end a period of confrontation and ushers in [an] era of amity and goodwill and cooperation which will promote and strengthen the unity and integrity of India. Now this confrontation, when it is brought to an end, it means that all the points that were raised by the Akali Dal — and there were, I forget how many, 40 points in the beginning. These 40 odd points were reduced to 11 points when they put to us eventually. These points were put to us by the president of the Akali Dal, Sant Longowalji, and he was the president of the Akali Dal. There was no dispute about his presidentship. The Akali Dal must stand by what is signed here. We have seen in the past the Akali Dal has not stood by what it has said. Every time you come to a solution, it has opened the package again. Now we expect them to stand by what has been said here. Otherwise, if everything that is raised and settled, we take things to commission, the judicial process is set into motion, and then suddenly when it is coming to end one party finds it unacceptable, so the whole thing falls flat. The government cannot proceed like this. There has to be some honesty when we come this. There must be some integrity where you stand by what you sign. The Government of India will stand by every single letter, comma, and the spirit behind this accord. We are willing to implement it today.

Similarly, a lot has been said about the other two accords. I am sorry for digressing from Punjab, but as we are on the accords I think I would like to cover this area. Mizoram, every single point has been completed. Nothing is outstanding. The last point to be completed was the election, and the elections have been announced. With the completion of the election, every single point in the Mizoram accord will be completed. One or two items are there for the state government to do in terms of compensation and rehabilitation. The state government is in the process of doing that and I have no doubt that after the election, whoever is elected will continue that process.

Assam, again the same thing. Almost every single point has been completed. The first four points now refer to preamble which don't actually specify what action has to be taken. Five, 5.1 has been done; 5.2 has been done; 5.3 has been done; 5.4 has been done; 5.5 has been done; 5.6 has been done; 5.7 is for the state government to do and they are in the process of doing it; 5.8 has been done; 5.9 is in the process of being done. We have been given a paper by the Assam government and it is being evaluated. It has only recently come to us in the past few weeks and we are looking at it. Six has been done; 7 has been done; 8.1 has been done; 8.2 has been done; 9 has been done; 9.2 has been done; 10 has been done; 11 has been done; 12 has been done; 13 has been done; 14A, 14B, 14C, 14D, 14E have been completed; 15 has been completed. Then at the tail end outside the accord, we had agreed to do certain things, which were: an election commission will be requested to insure the preparation of electoral roll, that has been done. Time for settlement of claims and objections and all that, that has been done. Election commission be requested to send central observers, that has been done.

Then there are three more points on the economic development, which were the refinery, the Asok paper mill, the jute mills, and the IIT [Indian Institute of Technology]. Again, we have taken action on all of them and there is nothing really pending with us. So on these particular things, the paper mill and the IIT — on the IIT the site has been selected, project advisory committee has been constituted. We are still awaiting some additional data which has to come to us. Asok paper mill, we have given a ways and means advance, a full package has been worked out. A jute rehabilitation package has also been worked out. The oil refinery in the accord it says very clearly is to be established in the private sector. OIL [Oil India Limited] has been asked to do a feasibility study. The state government has not given the adequate response to it. The Petroleum Ministry has listed 12 parties which could go into this. The state government has not responded. So nothing is pending on our part. The question that is being raised is on the barbed wire fencing [at the Bangladesh border to check infiltration]. It is no use putting up a fencing if there is no road behind that fencing. The fencing must have support over road. Otherwise, somebody will cut the fence and just come in. We have cleared 650 kms of roads to be improved. Two thousand and ten kms of new roads to be added, because only when we have the roads, then can we put [up] a fence and control the area.

I have myself spoken to the chief minister and I have explained that, yes, we are doing all this to protect the border. But the real protection of the border comes if the administration in the border areas is strong, if there are enough people living in the border area to give it a protection that is required. So from our side on all these accords, the implementation has been very thorough and it has been very quick. The few points which are pending of the state government, one of the points that Assam government raises, and that is what we are doing for the economic development of Assam. Now on the economic development of Assam, we have given them a 2,100 crore seventh plan which is almost double of the sixth plan. This year we have given them a massive increase in their annual plan outlay and which has now been gone up to [as heard] 575 crores compared to the 2,100 crores for the full 5 years. So it is very big jump, and I even got a letter from the chief minister appreciating the plan that we have given them.

So we are not pulling back, or holding back on anything with implementation. All this is thorough and it has been very quick. There is no going back from any of these settlements or accords.

[Announcer] We will come to Assam later. Any follow up questions on Punjab? Number 15.

[Venkatam] I am Venkatam from PTI. In your discussions with the Punjab chief minister, did you convey to him that if the response of the state is not adequate on both the law and order front and other fronts, then the center would be considering the option of president's rule, and what do you expect Mr Barnala to do, particularly on the law and order subject?

[Gandhi] Well, we expect him to get law and order under control. The first thing that is required of any government is to see that the life and security is ensured. In Punjab that is the problem today, and, he is fully aware of the options that we have if he is not able to perform in Punjab.

[Announcer] One sixty six.

[Lahorepuri — in Hindi] I am Lahorepuri from *Dainiksandesh*. You just said that the time is not yet right [for the president's rule in Punjab]. Afterall, how long we would have to wait and how many more corpses are to be counted before we will be in a position to interfere? Today the Punjab situation is such that it is no more a fight between Sikhs and non-Sikhs. Sikhs are fighting among themselves on sectarian lines. Sikhs in Punjab are cutting their hair, selling their property to settle down in other provinces of India. Similarly, people from other provinces wanted to migrate to Punjab, but the government has banned it. Many state governments have not allowed the Sikhs to sell their property, it has been banned for them, even if they are not migrating to Punjab. This is creating such an atmosphere in the country which makes the situation more serious. The similar situation may arise when operation like Bluestar [Army raid on the Golden Temple to flush out Sikh militants] is needed to eliminate a person which we considered a saint. Such a situation may arise when a big step is required. Now the center needs to intervene immediately to correct the law and order situation. What are your comments in this context?

[Gandhi — in Hindi] Such a situation has not arisen yet where a very big step is needed, like the Bluestar operation. But the situation is very serious. What you have said is correct to a great extent. Counting of corpses, how many people have been killed is not a correct scale of the situation. Because if we analyse the Bluestar operation, pre-Bluestar situation as well as the post-Bluestar situation, then both the president's rule and the Bluestar operation failed to control the situation. The Bluestar operation or other actions may have struck a big blow, but we were not able to reach its roots. And until we are able to reach the roots, we will not be able to eliminate it. On one side, it is right to say that the time will come sometime when we will not be able to tolerate it and we will be forced to take some other steps, and we will do it. But until that time arrives, we have to see that we deeply study the malice. This is not an ordinary situation. It is not a fight of a Sikh nation or of all Sikhs, or a Hindu-Sikh fight, or a fight between races. There is a big foreign hand behind it and everybody knows it. Before the people were denying this, but now nobody questions this. It has now been established that foreigners are involved in this. So the situation must be reviewed from that angle as well.

[Lahorepuri — in Hindi] When it comes to the matter of dealing with the foreign hand, then the center could directly intervene because under such a situation there is no need to invoke any [constitutional] provision. When it is the matter of foreign interference, then it falls within the central jurisdiction, the state government has no say in it.

[Gandhi — in Hindi] Surely. The center will take up the matter. But the center could only talk to foreign countries. We have held talks and taken up the matter. You must have seen that the home secretary had recently visited Pakistan. He held talks there. We have also talked to the governments of other countries, like Canada, Britain, and the United States, where extremists were located and where their training was taking place. Some of these countries have taken action to a great extent to control them. Other countries have taken lesser action. But all these countries have started taking some action. This is one side of the matter. The other side is to control the border. The Border Security Force [BSF] is on the border which is under the center's command, and we are controlling the border. You read everyday in newspapers that how strictly the BSF is carrying out its operation at the border.

But the BSF presence is hardly up to the 500 meters from the border, so it is very difficult to control everything from such a shallow depth. Now we cannot create a situation like erecting a wall or barbed wire all along the border. Even this will not stop the people. We have seen in Berlin that a wall has been erected, no-man's land has been established, watch towers are there, but still people cross the border. So this is not an ordinary matter. Both central government and state government have to see to it and their actions should be complementary.

[Announcer] Mr Bhardwaj, 51.

[Bhardwaj] Bhardwaj from *Hindustan Times*. Mr Prime Minister, I would like to ask you that an impression has been created that the government headed by you is a weak one which can be pushed around and that is one of the factors that we are finding that either the situation in Punjab or in other places is not getting better.

[Gandhi] Pushed around by who?

[Bhardwaj] Pushed around by the opposition parties like Mr Shahbuddin [Muslim leader in opposition Janata party who has given a call of boycott of the republic day by Muslims] [words indistinct] and other issues. The government, it seems, is being pushed around as it submits to pressure.

[Gandhi] This government does not submit to pressure. Let me be very clear about that and we do not get pushed around. Most of the names you have taken should be relegated to the cartoonists. They do not really deserve the importance that you are giving them here. I just mentioned the accords. Now if you look at the accords, we have implemented them, yes, but there is no weakness in the accords. The important thing is that every section in

our society should feel that there is a solution to their problems within our Constitution. We feel this is imperative. If they want to go outside the Constitution, if they want to do something which we feel is dangerous to the integrity and unity of India, we will not tolerate it, but below that level we would like to talk and resolve issues and not create confrontation.

[Announcer] One thirty two.

[Reporter — in Hindi] It is in knowledge that many ministers of the Barnala government are encouraging violence, and if it is in your knowledge that many ministers of the Barnala government are encouraging such an atmosphere, then what action you are taking against them?

[Gandhi — in Hindi] Now how could we take action against his ministers? This has to be taken by Mr Barnala. When he was in Delhi, I took up one more point which I did not read out to you. That was on his administration, because we feel that the administration in Punjab is very loose and is not running as desired. Other ills related to the loose administration are in evidence. We also raised the point about his ministers' role in weakening of the administration and encouragement of the extremists and asked what action he plans against them. We also raised the point that new recruitments in class three [of the civil service] should be with a little care because it will affect the future.

[Announcer] One seventy two.

[Gandhi — in Hindi] Your microphone is not working.

[Reporter] The ministers are being loudly accused of corruption and there is disorder in Punjab. What good will happen to a state where so many ministers of a government are involved in violence or encourage violence and also engage in corruption. How could you stop it?

[Gandhi - in Hindi] You are saying absolutely the right thing.

[Announcer] One hundred seventeen.

[Reporter — in Hindi] Rajiv Sukhla from *Ravibar*. Mr Prime Minister do you believe that talks should also be held with the All India Sikh Students Federation for the solution of the Punjab problem?

[Gandhi — in Hindi] We do not know yet what the All India Sikh Students Federation wants. As we know from Mizoram, where talks were held with Laldenga after 15 or 20 years and problems solved within our Constitution, such talks can also be held with others. But the foremost thing is that they should know what they want. It seems today to me that they might not know themselves what they actually want.

[Announcer] Mrs Pathak, eighty four.

[Reporter — in Hindi] Manu Pathak, *Dainik Navjyoti*: With the help of foreign forces and the support of elements in the Punjab government, Khalistani forces are escalating the guerrilla warfare against the central government and the patriotic citizens of Punjab. In these activities they are also getting the support of fanatics in Punjab. Mr Gandhi, how long can the leaders staying under strict security in Delhi sit tight with their ideal of solving the problem of guerrilla warfare and terrorism by political means? At the same time, after how many cold blooded murders of innocent citizens of Punjab, the central government will come forward and take steps against the existing government?

[Gandhi — in Hindi] I have already replied to the second part of your question when someone asked from the right side. So far as the first part of your question goes, we have to think very seriously about it throughout the country. It will not be right to say categorically which will be the correct answer to it. It needs [a] lot of debate. But what you have mentioned is very true — is it merely terrorism or extremism which can be tackled only with the law and order machinery of the state government, or is it a new constitutional issue which has been raised after the Constitution has been framed and which cannot be handled by the state government? But it is a very big issue and I don't want to open it for discussion here. Maybe there is a need for a debate in the country to end terrorism which can show how this problem can be tackled.

[Announcer] One six seven.

[Reporter] Chandan from *(Munshif)* daily, Hyderabad. What will be the fate of the Punjab accord if the Punjab government finally refuses to transfer 30,000 acres in lieu of Chandigarh?

[Gandhi] 70,000 I hope.

[Reporter] 40 you have already agreed.

[Gandhi] No, no, no, that is why I read that particular paragraph. The last commission said that 70,000 has to be transferred and they identified 45,000 which could be transferred. So there is 45 and 25 in a sense, but that 45 that has been identified is 45 which comes under the commission under 7.4 and 7.2 clearly says that anything that comes under 7.4 cannot be transferred in lower, it is distinct from, I think the word is distinct from, so that 45 cannot come under 7.2 because that 45 is under 7.4. So, 70,000 has to be identified under 7.2 separate from what is under 7.4. I hope I have made this clear because this should be very clear.

[Announcer] One two four, Mr Chatturvedi.

[Chatturvedi — in Hindi] Mr Prime Minister, you know well that there are two difficulties regarding the Punjab accord and those have been created by Akali Dal and the Barnala government. If they had accepted the verdict of the commission and not built the canal, then no one would say that the accord has not been fulfilled. Moreover, you know that it has failed to maintain law and order. At the same time you know that Barnala does not have a majority in the legislative assembly under which he can run a legal and constitutional government in the state. If that government is existing there, it is because of you and your wishes. When you see how much the situation has deteriorated there, why don't you remove your sympathetic hand from there which will automatically bring an end to the Barnala government and smoothen the way for constitutional imposition of president's rule.

[Gandhi — in Hindi] His party is still the largest in the legislative assembly. The faction, which was separated from his party, was very small and his is the biggest party in the legislature. Everything depends on the governor's advice and we are ready to act according to it. On behalf of the Congress Party we have watched the situation in Punjab in different ways. We have tried to measure the issues while casting our votes and build our position. At the same time we did not want to do anything which could strengthen the hands of terrorists. For instance, when the question of survival of the government was raised last time, it was limited to only one point. Their opposition said that the police should not have entered the Golden Temple to apprehend the terrorists. Despite that, when the Barnala government dispatched the police to enter the Golden Temple and capture the terrorists, how could we not support him on that issue? So when such questions are raised, we do support them. However, we oppose them when they create some problems.

[Announcer] Eighteen.

[Unidentified Reporter] Mr Prime Minister, it is known that no organized separatist or terrorist movement can be sustained for long without adequate, rather very rich financial support from national and international sources. Now, what efforts has your government and government like Punjab, (?where) continued terrorism, made to identify these sources of financial support to the terrorists and separatists and what efforts you are taking to plug because this money speaks with two faces — one is a polite public face and the other is big heavy financial support to subversion.

[Gandhi] You are absolutely right and we have looked at this aspect very carefully. It is not only the money transfers which we have tried to tighten up through the Home Ministry from abroad, money transfers within India. It also involves the smuggling activity across the border, which also gives financial support. We are trying to tighten that up. We have taken a number of steps and in fact, it has reduced very substantially. We are trying to coordinate action on the smuggling side with Pakistan. We still have to see how they respond. Initial response is good, but initial response from them has been good on a number of occasions. We will have to wait and see what that actually translates into in terms of action. We are also seeing what we can do to prevent such transactions [from] taking place through parcels and packets and sort of [word indistinct] less easily indentified means. We have taken a number of steps.

[Announcer] One hundred eight.

[Reporter] (Taqbil) Singh, *Sunday Times*, Prime Minister, you said that you are worried about the foreign hands which are supporting terrorism, yet we have recently seen from revelation from the Amritsar police that one of the murder weapons used in the Khuda bus massacre was found in the house of Major Singh Oboke, one of Mr Barnala's ministers. We have also seen that Mr Barnala allowed the Khalistan Commando Force to appear on a public platform for the first time since the Punjab problem began. In view of all this why do you still have such a touching faith in Mr Barnala's ability to solve things?

[Gandhi] Well, as I have just said that we have brought [up] this point regarding his minister's involvement with the terrorists. We have highlighted it with him and we are looking to him to take some action. I think he will take some action.

[Announcer reads out a number, Gandhi interrupts] Let me finish. It is a question also of giving every opportunity to the democratic process because if we do put in president's rule, it means that democracy in a sense has not been able to curb the problems in Punjab and we would prefer that the democratic process is allowed every opportunity before we finally put in president's rule.

[Reporter] Gyanendra Pandey, Delhi representative of *Nai Duniya*, Hindi daily published from Indore. Mr Prime Minister, three commissions — Sarkaria Commission, Netro Commission, and ... — have so far been set up on Punjab, but no commission wants to go ahead with its work. Why has such a situation arose and what are you going to do in this regard?

[Gandhi — in Hindi] No, this is not a correct statement. Not three but four commissions were set up. We also had the Ranganath Mishra commission. Reports of three commissions have already come and the report of the fourth one, the (Iradi) Commission, is about to come and its has been mostly due to the Punjab government not the tribunal.

The discussion of the Punjab government was long and protracted and thus there was the delay but there is nothing like that the commission work has been stuck somewhere.

[Announcer] Shall we move on to another...

[Gandhi] You have had enough on Punjab, you want to go on to something else.

[Announcer] Last questioner. Eighty one, last question on Punjab.

[Gandhi] Okay, 46 after that last question.

[Reporter in — Hindi] My question on Punjab is on the security belt...

[Gandh] Security?

[Reporter] We have discussed widely last year about the security belt and felt that it should be there. You have also said now that the borders under Border Security Force have some problems. Don't you feel that there should [be] a security belt, which the Punjab government has yet not agreed to? Another related issue is that the problems are not confined only to Punjab; we find a similar problem in Gurkhaland and also notice the continuation of Jharkand movement. A new process has started. Isn't it necessary for the center to seriouly consider these new types of development and try to find some political, cultural, and social solutions for them.

[Gandhi — in Hindi] Let us first talk about a security belt. The fact is that the security belt cannot be effective until and unless the area becomes like the union territory. It will be effective only when that type of control is there. It involves lots of problems to

impose that kind of control if that is the territory of a state government. Basically there will be many wire crossings in the administration between the center and the state governments. There will be questions on what we should do and what the state governments will perform, where the law and order question will come on us and where it will go to the states. We could not correctly reply to all these questions. We held talks in detail with the state government. The Home Ministry has also discussed on this issue. We held talks among us and also with the opposition, but we could not find a workable solution. On the second part of your question on other movements, we should have to watch them seriously. When I visited north Bengal I realized that a feeling of dissatisfaction is being developed not only in the hills but also on the ground. I have talked to Jyotibabu [West Bengal chief minister] in this regard.

[Announcer] Forty six. We give the last one to Punjab.

[Reporter in — Urdu] Mr Prime Minister, my name is J.P. Bhatnagar, correspondent of *Mussalman*, Madras. First of all I thank you for giving me the last chance. The 14 questions were also in my mind which the people have already asked. [laughter]

[Gandhi in — Hindi] If all has been asked, is there nothing left? [laughter]

[Reporter] Sir, I have saved [the] last the question with great difficulty. Everyone, including you, knows that whatever is happening in Punjab is that well organized groups of people from Pakistan regularly come, loot, and kill in the name of Khalistan and Akalis and return across the border. As you have stated before that the borders will be sealed to check the infiltration of all those elements, who are wholly Pakistanis coming inside Indian border to loot and create disturbances. If you do not properly seal the borders, this will continue. What have you to say in this regard?

[Gandhi] In one sense your question is absolutely right — that until the borders are totally sealed, it is difficult to check on terrorism, extremism. Certainly there are difficulties until borders are sealed. But it is also very difficult to seal the border. Look at the border, how long it is. Until we can put pillars close to each other and keep them clear, this cannot be done. That process will be very expensive. We might not be having that capability to meet that expense. We will have [to] find out some other way which can solve this task.

[Reporter] What about the border lines which are already made and from where Pakistani infiltrators come.

[Gandhi] There is no no man's land. There is no man's land on our side. Border is up to the end.

[Announcer] We have spent about 45 minutes on this subject. May we now move on to Assam. Number 45.

[Reporter] This was a very, just you mean to say, the question related with the AGP [Asom Gana Parishad] government in Assam. I am Deb Prakash from *Assam Express*, a newspaper daily from Guwahati. So the government of AGP is totally blaming the center for not applicant for the Assam accord. But you have given a full data right now. [graf as heard]

[Gandhi] I have gone through it point by point for you.

[Reporter] Yes, I am just requesting you, honorable Prime Minister, that the Assam government is blaming the center for not implementing the Assam accord, but you have given a brief data right now. But still the government of Assam is saying that if center will not intervene, again this Assam will turn into next Punjab. You know the violence is going on. The Karbi Anglong has demanded for [a] separate regime and everywhere there is chaos in Assam. People are also fed up. Why you are not taking a factual part on to (? punish) all these things because the Assamese people are very much banking on your leadership.

[Gandhi] Very difficult question, because you know as far as the accord is concerned I have read out point by point what we have done. There is only one point which is really pending with us, which is under discussion, which is the safeguards to the cultural and language of Assam and the Assamese people. Now here I would like to point out that there are various types of people in Assam, the various groups of people in Assam. There is not only one Assamese people. There are the original Assamese people who were there before those who called themselves Assamese today were there. There are other tribals. We have to look after the culture and the language of all of them and perhaps most important is, while we talk of looking after the culture and the language, we cannot make that into a political tool for local parties. So when we are going to give safeguards for culture and language, they will be safeguards for language and culture. They will not be political safeguards or points of political action. The problem that is happening in Assam at the moment is not with the accord, like I read point by point; there is nothing pending us. On the economic development now we could have justice easily, I have said that instead of giving you a 2,100 crore plan or instead of giving you 575 crores for this year, coming year we will give you only 300 crores for this year and 275 will be for economic development. So it is only a way of producing a package. To us economic development is for the plan, and Assam's full plan, including their own expenses, are filled by the center. What more can we do for the development of Assam? Their plan has gone up by [a] very vast amount between the fourth plan, the fifth plan, the sixth plan, and the seventh plan. It is exponential rise. It is very difficult for them to even absorb the amount of money that has been given to them in these plans. So, it is not a question of separating whether economic, I forget the word that was used looking after economic rebuilding of Assam or something like that. I can't find it now. But that is not separate from the plan. When we give a bigger plan that is the economic restructuring of Assam.

[Reporter] Sir my name is (Shiv Rantnakul), I work for a paper from Assam, *Guwahati Sentinel*. Sir, there seems to have been some kind of a lack of rapport between the Assam government and the central government. While the central government says that all the provisions of the Assam accord have been implemented, the Assam government says they have not been implemented yet in full. On this the chief minister had also met the prime minister recently. In the meanwhile, the All Assam Students Union have gone on record to say that they will resume their agitation. While one of the most important points of dispute

is the establishment of the (?Rao) oil refinery. You had very kindly mentioned that the oil refinery will be established in the private sector. The Assam government exactly opposes this because the original accord of which I got a copy in my hand says an oil refinery will be established in Assam. The public sector or the private sector has not been mentioned. Since the oil industry has...

[Gandhi interrupts] May I interrupt you a minute. I will read the clause on oil refinery, I have got it in my hand also. It says: To establish an oil refinery in Assam, [the] government will render all possible assistance in terms of institutional and bank finance to facilitate the establishment of a refinery in the private sector.

[Reporter] (?New returned) document I have got the private sector is not there. But anyway, sir, this is one of the points of the Assam government...

[Gandhi interrupts] The original document is with me. [laughter]

[Reporter] Now Assam government says that it should be in the public sector as indicated...

[Gandhi interrupts] It will not be in the public sector. We do not have the money in the public sector. And it says in the private sector. We have no intention to go back on what we have said in the accord.

[Reporter] But there seems to be something of a lack of communication between these two.

[Gandhi] It is printed. You read my statement in parliament. It is in that. There is no lack of communication. There are certain problems which are taking place in Assam. I don't want to go into those here, those are not our problems. And if there are some internal problems in the AGP that is not for us to solve, it is for the AGP to solve.

[Announcer] Eighty eight.

[Reporter] Mr prime minister, I want to know...

[Gandhi interrupting] Name please.

[Reporter] Deepak Chadari Awadh. I want to know what you are going to do to stop interference in oil production and transportation in Assam. And secondly you have said that petroleum ministry has given the name of 12 parties who are interested to put a refinery. But we are also told by the officials in the petroleum ministry asserting that there is no oil for another refinery in Assam. So what is the position? I will ask another question. And the Assam government wanted Assam public undertaking to put a new gas grid there. And we are also told that the central gas authority or ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] they will put up themselves. So what is the situation there (?obviously).

[Gandhi] Well, on the oil refinery initial reports to us also say there is not enough oil to warrant another oil refinery in Assam and that is why we have asked EIL [expansion unknown] to do a report and they are still waiting for some responses from the state government and is pending for that. On the gas grid again, there is also not enough gas for commercial exploitation in small pockets in the specific locations, perhaps. But as a major exploitation excercise at least I have been told that up to now we have not enough gas. Perhaps in the future we will find more gas and this will become viable. We are trying in the meantime to utilize this in the locations where it is found in whatever quantity it is available.

[Announcer] Shall we move on to Gurkhaland? First question, 84

[Reporter] My name is Arunoday Guha from *Bharat Katha*, Calcutta. Mr prime minister, would you kindly reply me candidly why Mr Jyoti Basu takes so much time to announce after your meeting that Gurkhaland movement is antinational. A. B. There are movements like Gurkhaland, in Uttarakhand in your U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] also. They are demanding hill area as a union territory. And Jharkhand area also. How you are going to combat all these movements?

[Gandhi] Well, to be absolultely candid you will have to ask Jyoti Basuji yourself. Because, how can I tell you why he took so much time or why he takes more time or less time. And as you are from Calutta, I am sure you will ask him next time you see him. On the more basic question of a sort of dissatisfaction coming from the hill areas, this does need serious going into, and I have already started an excercise to see what can be done. Part of the problem is that the structure of our ministries, the structure of the administration is such that it is really oriented basically toward the plains and solutions to problems as they appear in the plains. When we look for development in the hills what happens invariably is a transposition of those solutions from the plains to the hills, but those solutions don't necessarily work. So we have to go much deeper in this and somehow develop in our administration in the center and in the states an ability to think of solutions for hill problems, hill solutions for hill problems. And this is not only with the hills; similar problems are there with the islands. Now there it was much easier, because, both are [words indistinct] set of islands of our union territories we made an island development authority and already we are finding a difference in the way the development is taking place. And I will tell you the sort of things that are being done. When I went to Andaman, I think you are all aware that the Andaman-Nicobar covers one of our largest exclusive economic zones, vast areas of sea which we are not exploiting today. And what we are doing for fisheries in the Andamans, we are making ponds on the land where there is no water even to drink and we are putting carps because that is what works in UP. Now obviously this sort of solutions cannot be long term solutions and they are going to cause problems in the development of those areas. So like the islands we have to have some sort of common thinking about solutions to hill problems. I have talked to the chief ministers who have hills in the northeast [words indistinct] coming to this because northeast council coordinates all that in their related problems. So leaving the northeast out, I have to talked Jyotiji, I have talked to the UP CM [chief minister], I have talked Himachal CM and I have talked to Kashmir CM. And, we are trying to see how we can have a new thinking in the development of all the hills. Perhaps in the coming few months we will be able to bring something to you.

[Announcer] 17.

[Reporter] My name is Bhattacharya, from *Amrit Bazaar Patrika*, Calcutta. Mr prime minister Sir, when take [word indistinct] your government you said that yours is a government that work fastest. Now after 2 years looking back would you still share the same view or would like to tell us what are the achievements of your government and where you have failed?

[Gandhi] Do you want to finish GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] or should we go we go on to that question?

[Unidentified reporter] No, GNLF will also come into that because it took a long time between the center and the state to come to some kind of agreement that you will be going and joining.

[Gandhi] No let us stick to the subject that we are tackling otherwise we will be jumping everwhere. On GNLF? No more on GNLF?

[Unidentified reporter] We want to ask about Congress.

[Gandhi] Oh, you want your subject not his subject.

[Unidentified reporter] On GNLF one more question please.

[Announcer] One more question on GNLF somebody asked.

[Unidentified reporter] Here, sir.

[Announcer] There, there 176.

[Reporter] Mr prime minister, on December 19 at Darjeeling, you said Nepali-speaking people who came to India after the Nepali treaty was signed in July 1950 would not be given Indian citizenship. Now what is the rationale behind fixing a date as cutoff year?

[Gandhi] Because that was when the treaty was signed. Before the treaty was signed we have accepted them as Indian nationals and we have given them citizenship. If there are any outstanding cases or there are some individual problems we are willing to solve them. But that was the cutoff date as has been recognized in the past. Now, the problem with the future, that means, sorry, post that date, is that there are lakhs of people, Nepalese in India, lakhs of Indians in Nepal. If we tamper with that superficially or without going into it in full depth and solving every aspect of that problem we are going to have all those people as refugees in Nepal and in India. That is what will happen immediately. So abrogation of clause 7 as has been asked for will not be for the benefit of the Nepalese in India whether they are Gurkhas or any other Nepalese. And similarly it will be tremendously damaging for the Indians in Nepal. So there can not be just a simple solution to these things.

[Announcer] Eighty seven. Is it on Gurkhaland?

[Alok Mehta in Hindi] Mr prime minister, I am from *Navbharat Times*. The senior most leader of your party, Pundit Kamalapathy Tripathi, quoting Mrs Gandhi, said (?last January) that we consider Gurkhaland agitation in any form as antinational. But you have stated that it is not an antinational agitation. But your party only is raising a big issue on it. They only have described the Punjab and Assam accords as wrong. On the other hand there is another question connected with this that during visits to Bengal, Kerala and other states you announced about projects, but the planning commission was telling that it could not allot funds for them — whether you make announcements for 400 crores or 500 crores — and the state governments in turn make complaints over this. Because of this the position of your party becomes weak. I would like to know your opinion on this.

[Gandhi in Hindi] If you would permit, of the two questions, the first one is on the GNLF and I will give my reply to it. The second question is on economic issues and I will reply to that when we come to economic issues. On the GNLF you have spoken about the views of Kamalapathy Tripathi. He is a very senior man and has every right to his views. And those are his views. From the government side, all the documents — from the press, those presented by the government of West Bengal which have been substantiated — we have shown them to the law ministry and home ministry, and there was nothing by which we could call the movement antinational. Hence, we have not called it antinational. There was one aspect which was somewhat questionable — It was a letter written by them. For that, I have forgotten the exact word, but perhaps they have regretted. So why should we open it again?

[Announcer] One hundred six. Mr Sathish Chakravarthy.

[Reporter] Mr prime minister, under the 1950 treaty, there are two classes of Nepalese made in this country. Now what is happening the treaty gives the Nepalese immigrants from Nepal is again, economic right, but not political right. We now have a census to clearly show who are the Nepalese, the Nepalese in India and who are the Indian Nepalese because I understand, some of the Nepalese citizens enrol themselves as voters and they also have one of them, I think, became even a minister in Bengal. So I think a situation has come when we should clearly understand whether the Nepalese from Nepal are creating problems or the Nepalese residents in India who are Indian citizens, they are behind this movement.

[Gandhi] This is a very serious problem. It is not only with respect to the Nepalese, it is with respect to other people also who crossed our border — whether it is on the eastern border, around Bangladesh or western border around Pakistan — there is a very serious problem of people who come in who are not Indian citizens getting themselves registered and voting. And we have taken this up, home ministry has taken it up. We are looking at ways of tightening up the registration process — the process of making the electoral rolls — in all the border areas. Well this will only be a beginning. We will tighten up right through the country, but we will start with the border areas. This has already been put into motion. We have taken a number of steps, and we hope this will solve the problem.

[Announcer] Many hands. Now I think we should move on to party.

[Announcer] Eighty four.

[Reporter in Hindi] Congress president, Mr Rajiv, at a news conference in 1985 you firmly stated that the organizational elections of the Congress-I party would be held at the beginning of 1986. Kamlapati Tripathi, who used to talk a lot about the elections, had to leave his post and there has been no talk of any elections even though 1986 has ended. Now, what is your program about this?

[Gandhi in Hindi] There were some problems in holding elections. The biggest was related to the electoral rolls. You have just spoken of Panditji. There had been a great problem in Varanasi as well. We had a total of 7 lakh members - - 4 lakh made by one group and 3 lakh by another group - - I am giving you a round figure, in Varanasi. The fact is that we are to some extent bogged down in the scrutiny of such a vast number, as it is a very big task; and we are trying to see how we can identify the genuine enrollment. We have not been able to find a better solution to this problem, as this issue has been largely politicized, even down to the lowest level, and it has become very difficult to distinguish between the genuine and the phony enrollment. If we go for an election without identifying the true and the false, it will cause many problems.

[Reporter ] Mr Kamlapati Tripathi has stated on several occasions that there are certain influential elements in the Congress party who do not want and will not allow the elections to be held. Have you been able to identify those influential elements?

[Gandhi] We have certainly been able to identify. I had already told you about Varanasi.

[Reporter] But, which are those influential elements which do not want the elections to be held ? [laughter]

[Gandhi] It cannot be rightful for anyone to claim that members belonging to his group are all genuine and those belonging to his competitor's group in the area are bogus.

[Announcer] One six eight.

[Reporter] Mr prime minister. Mr Kamlapati Tripathi wrote to you on April last and again on December 17 or 18 complaining about certain deviations from the traditionally accepted economic policy and ways of party functioning. Do you feel the policies referred to by Mr Tripathi need to be refined?

[Gandhi ] I don't think there are any problems with our economic policies. The economy is in better shape today than perhaps it has been for many many years,and there is no need to redefine our economic policies. They have been defined well. Most of them are moving well. Yes, there are certain hindrances in the policies that we have defined.Some are not going as well as we wanted them to work, and we will have to delay them a little bit. In other areas, we will have to push the administration a little harder so the implementation is better. But these are really a sort of fine tuning exercises As a major thrust our economic policies have given very good results. I won't go into the details till we come to the economic aspect.

[Announcer ] One seventy nine.

[Reporter] Media representatives, particularly those covering the home ministry and the All India Congress-I Committee, find themselves stonewalled more often than ever before. Have the traditional spokesmen become diffident on their own or have they been instructed to be less communicative?

[Gandhi] In fact, I am finding the same problems [laughter] because when on the one hand we are looking for our general secretaries and the home ministry to be more open in what they are doing for some reason, we are not able to get them to be more open. We will try and do something about that.

[Announcer ] One seven nine.

[Reporter ] Sir, I am Swarup from *Press Trust of India*. There is one question. Mr Pranab Mukherjee and his new party, they have accused you of deviating from the policies of Pandit, Indira, and also from the time-tested policy of the Congress. An almost identical charge was made by Tripathi in his latest letters - - second or third, fourth, I don't know - - and he has also expressed his disagreement with what he calls the policy of accords. So will you please reply to these charges and what are your comments? May I ask another connected question ...

[Gandhi] Well, I thought I had relegated Pranab Mukherjee and his party to the cartoonists. [laughter] You really want me to comment on this? I don't think it's worth the time.

[Reporter] Then there is another question I think I should ask you before the times is over. Almost a debate has begun on the need to change the present political system. Mr Hegde [Janata Party chief] and Mr Sathe [Congress-I leader] feel that there should be changeover to presidential system, Mr Tiwari [external affairs minister] feels that [words indistinct].

[Gandhi] Will you please repeat last sentence again? Who feels [word indistinct].

[Reporter] Mr Tiwari feels that Mr Sathe and Mr Hegde are [words indistinct].

[Gandhi] Well this issue has been raised by some members of the Janata Party in the press, but we have not received any such letter or memorandum or anything from the Janata Party. If they are serious about these views, we expect to get something from them and then we will respond to it. I am looking forward to some correspondence from the president of the Janata Party on this issue.

[Reporter] No Sir. My question about this Panditji's [Kamalapati Tripathi] letter. He says that he is opposed to the policy of accords vehemently.

[Gandhi] Well, I did cover that earlier when I was talking about the accords, but if you like I will cover it again. It is very easy to take a confrontation on every issue. It is also politically very popular, that you take every issue head on, make a big tamasha [show]; but the fact is that is divisive for the country. What we have to try and do is build a nation. And to build a nation we have

to give confidence to every section our society that their problems can be solved within the constitution, within the nation as it is. And that can only come if you sit and talk with them and come to solutions. If you look at the accords that we have signed, there is nothing that we have given in those accords which weakens our unity and integrity in any way. And if without weakening our nation in any way, we can solve problems, I see no reason why we should not solve problems. In fact, I see every reason why we should solve these problems.

[Anouncer] One two seven.

[Pankaj Sharma in Hindi] Mr Congress president. I am Pankaj Sharma from *Navbharat Times*. Many of your party members believe that one person should not remain on two posts. What is your view?

[Gandhi in Hindi] It depends on many things. In our party as well, there are many persons on two posts — not only on president's post, but at other posts as well. It depends on the situation. It depends on the local situation, national situation and on many other factors. There is no simple answer to this.

[Announcer] Eighty nine.

[Reporter][Name indistinct] from the daily *Maharashtra Times*. Sir, you said that you have great faith in Indian democracy and you already said in Punjab you are not in favor of president's rule immediately. But there is one area where president's rule exists, that is your party. Because all your secretaries have resigned and you are not doing anything, and last year exactly on 19 January you said you want to delegate your powers to others, you are against any concentration of any power, for that matter economic or political. Sir, you wanted to delegate powers to your vice presidents and others and you wanted to do something, but it seems that nothing has happened. Sir, your intentions are always very good, [word indistinct], but implementation is going very poor. Why this happens?

[Gandhi] If you remember after 19 January last year I did delegate my powers to vice president and acting president.

[Reporter] But they are gone.

[Gandhi] That was not my fault. And you know how it happened. And I did not ask for the resignations of all our office bearers. They had submitted the resignations. I had asked all the general secretaries and joint secretaries to continue, and they are continuing. I am watching their performance. There was a feeling among the general secretaries that they were not able to function because of slight deviation from the constitution in the way the office bearers had been made. [sentence as heard] Now there is no deviation. It is as per the constitution, so I hope that they will be able to function. I am watching them for a while, if I think they are functioning well, then there will be no need for change.

[Reporter] Mr prime minister. The point is basic. You have the intention of delegating your powers you do not want to concentrate in your hands.

[Gandhi] I have delegated. I have delegated to the general secretaries.

[Reporter] No, no. Even for an appointment of the legislative assembly nominations or a jila parishad [district council] president, a chief minister has to come to you.

[Gandhi] No. he has to come to the parliamentary board.

[Reporter] But whenever they meet they tell us they have to discuss with the prime minister.

[Gandhi] They have to meet the parliamentary board and get it cleared by the parliamentary board. That has been the case with the Congress ever since the elections have been taken place.

[Reporter] Whatever [words indistinct] to a post office, and for that also you will have to bring a bill. [laughter]

[Gandhi] AICC [All India Congress Committee] is not a post office. It is in fact taking very much its own decision. If you see for example, we are having a problem in Goa. We have asked the general secretary to go and sort it out in the party there. It is not a minister and it is not me who is doing it. The work has been delegated to the AICC. And what is important is not the menial day-to-day work which can be handled at various levels, mostly at joint secretary level and other levels. But where there is an important question, yes, we are delegating to AICC.

[Reporter] Well sir, we wanted to do it in the beginning. Wish you a very happy, prosperous, stable new year. [laughter]

[Reporter] If I go by your statements, then the reorganization of the AICC is postponed.

[Gandhi] Depends on what you call reorganization. A very major part of it has already been reorganized. Two of the senior posts have been removed. It is being reorganized. That is what reorganization is.

[Reporter] I like to point you out that Kamlapati Tripathi was elected working president by All India Congress-I Committee in 1979. As he has tendered resignation ...

[Gandhi] Are you sure of your facts?

[Reporter] Yes.

[Gandhi] He became working president after as a general secretary.

[Reporter] I was there and a number of correspondents were there. Indira Gandhi ...

[Gandhi interrupts] In 1979.

[Reporter] Indira Gandhi offered the post and she elected ...

[Gandhi interrupts] Please check your facts. They are totally incorrect. He was nominated working president in the early 1980's. I don't remember the exact date.

[Reporter] I can challenge you at the moment. I let you come to...

[Gandhi interrupts] I can guarantee you. He was made working president after I joined politics, because I remember clearly.

[Reporter] [Words indistinct]

[Gandhi] But it was in the early 1980's, it was not in 1979.

[Reporter] But our [words indistinct] working president.

[Gandhi] But it never worked. [laughter]

[Announcer] One hundred and seven. Mr Supendra Vajpayee.

[Vajpayee] Mr prime minister, if you remember, you made a very important observation at the Bombay Congress that there were power brokers in your party. And perhaps you expected people to identify them or the people expected you to identify them; subsequent to that there has been a general feeling among all political parties that there has been an erosion of political conscience, which, perhaps, is also considerably responsible for the type of violence we find in various places. Now there has been growth of sectarianism. To what extent you subscribe to this view and what solutions, if any, you have in mind to curb this phenomenon? You have succeeded in bringing antidefection bill. Perhaps, you can also contain sectarianism by banning communal parties and taking certain other consequential steps. Do you intend doing any of these things which bring about a new political climate in the country?

[Gandhi] Yes, we do intend doing a number of things. Firstly, on the question of power brokers, we have eliminated a very large number of power brokers, and in fact much of the feed that the press is getting on Congress party comes from the power brokers who are a little dissatisfied with what is happening. So I would request you also to be a litte careful on the inputs that you are getting from members of the Congress Party, because mostly these are people who have been at the center of the power broker exercise, and when we try to remove them they do create and react in this way. On the other aspect of the what are we trying to do for changing the political, well, electoral system, the political attitudes, and all that, we have got a paper which has come from the election commissioner. We have looked at it. We agree with many of the things he said. We find some of them are not practical and may give difficulties. We believe the opposition parties have also reacted. We have asked the Congress party to debate this out. They had a debate during the last session of the parliamentary party and they are having a debate during this recess period, and toward the beginning of the next session we should be ready with what we want to bring in — a new legislation that we want to bring.

[Reporter] In particular, how do you account for growth of communalism in the context of secularism?

[Gandhi] On the specific aspect of communal parties, we have had a number of exercises done, and I think certainly we are ready to take a number of steps. We will be taking those steps. There is a slight difficulty in identifying where a party becomes communal and the method for that identification seems to be on the, what should I say, they err on the side of allowing communal parties to come in. I mean it's too much on the safe side. I don't know if it will really be effective enough to bring something like what has been proposed in. So we are trying to review that to see if something slightly more truthful can be evolved which is truthful and practical.

[Reporter] Don't you think even secular parties are ...

[Gandhi interrupts] Do you really want to have a discussion or should we let others have a chance?

[Announcer] I think, we will go on to 125.

[Reporter] Since the Indian Union Muslim League has not disassociated itself from the call to boycott the Republic Day parade and since the Kerala unit of the Muslim League has not disaffiliated from the Indian Union Muslim League, will the Congress sever its connections in Kerala with the Muslim League?

[Gandhi] Well, we have taken this very seriously and we will be looking at the various aspects.

[Announcer] Ninety-eight, Mr Rangaswami.

[Rangaswami] Sir, I remember occasions when the Congress working committee used to be very powerful and on two occasions a prime minister was chosen by the working committee two or three times. Do you visualize a situation like that to develop in the party organization in the coming years when the members of the working committee could be extraordinarily influential in their own respective regions?

[Gandhi] What is the question?

[Reporter] I said do you visualize a situation to arrive...

[Gandhi interrupting] Do I visualize?

[Reporter] to develop in the near future?

[Gandhi] Well, I have been trying to develop people who can stand on their feet in the regions and in the states where it seems to be very difficult not only in the Congress, even in the opposition.

[Announcer] Eighty six.

[Unidentified person] Where is eighty six? [words indistinct].

[Reporter] Sir, this is about Babri Mosque. You know nobody can support this boycott [of Repubic Day celebrations on 23 January] call which has been given by the Mushawarat [Islamic organization]. I don't want to take the name of one individual, there are many others and parties.

[Gandhi] So, I don't think the Muslims will support it either.

[Reporter] I am coming to a real point, I want to ask you, sir, is this. You know this issue has hung fire for a long time. And there

are enough indications to show that the Uttar Pradesh [UP] government has shown great ineptitude in handling this matter because this temple, this mosque, you know, had been ordered to be locked by very sagacious leaders — Pandit and Sardar Patel and all. Now, apparently I want to ask you whether UP government alone can be interested to deal with this issue in which it has got itself enmeshed. Whether the center would take any initiative to find a solution which is acceptable and which should localize the issue, and will be acceptable to the people of the area, in whatever form, maybe a committee of the NIC [National Integration council], maybe some other group. Or the center will just be a spectator?

[Gandhi] Well, it is very difficult for us, either from the center or from the UP governemnt, as Up government, to get involved in it. It is sub judice. It is going on in the UP high court. And we would not liek to do anything while the court case is in progress.

[Reporter] No appeal has been filed by the UP government [words indistinct]. I don't [words indistinct] the courts systems are not functioning, because the government has not filed an affidavit.

[Gandhi] We will try and get the courts to function.

[Announcer] Sir, will you want the next subject.

[Gandhi] O.K. should we, one more on this subject and we go to the next? Technology? Economics?

[Unidentified voice] Economics.

[Gandhi] O.K. Let's go to economics.

[Announcer] Economic policy, first question, 133.

[Reporter] Mr Prime Minister, my name is John for the *Financial Express*. After you became prime minister, you administered a number of steps also to stimulate the economy. And these pronouncements are being made regarding technology imports, imports of equipment liberally, licensing very liberally, and [words indistinct] including electronics policy, software policy etcetera. Now, after 2 years, do you find there are some contradictions in these policies?

[Gandhi] Some?

[John] Some contraditions in these policies. Because the imports are increasing and the exports are not rising. And liberal licensing has benefited some sectors, and at the same time some other sectors are suffering because of the liberal licensing. Would you tell us whether the government has made an assessment of all these policies, mid-term. If so, what is the conclusion.

[Gandhi] Well, our reaction is the policy is working well and there are no contradictions. Let me first go to your point that exports are not rising and imports are rising, I would like to correct that. I think you might be aware the April to November figure for exports is about 17.3 percent. So exports are definitely rising and rising quite well. The imports on the hand have been only 1.4 percent this year, which is very low, the increase in imports. So there is no problem with the policy as such. We have been looking at each sector and the economy on the whole is looking very good, the growth rate last year has been very high at 5.1 percent. This year we should be very close to 5 percent. Because, it is a little low because of the drought. Inflation on the wholesale price is about 6 percent, which is o.k. The consumer price index has gone up a little high and we are trying to correct that. Partly it is because of edible oils and that is part of our exercise of stopping imports and increasing domestic production. On the industrial production, we wondered why our figures of industrial production were not showing what we thought was the growth and we discovered that the traditional figures did not include three major industries — the petroleum sector, the electronic sector and — I forget what the third sector was. But if we include these sectors in as a very much part of industry, our industrial growth is very good. It should be ...[changes thought]. Including these, the tentative figures were so high that we have sent them back to be crosschecked to see if they were all right or not. But they should be above 8 percent.

[Announcer] Ninety nine.

[Unidentified Reporter] Given your emphasis on competition and new technology and despite the massive majority you still enjoy, why has there been no attempt to enact fresh labor legislations to cover retrenchment, and what do you plan to do in this area to ensure that some units can die rather than remain a burden on the economy?

[Gandhi] Well, we have allowed some units to die. We have passed some laws which allow units to die. We have increased the compensation that is paid. But the solution is not in retrenchment. Retrenchment is a very capitalistic solution, very rough solution which in fact means that management has failed. I mean that is what retrenchment means. So that is not an answer. We must get a better answer than that. On the other hand, we have said very clearly that we cannot allow industry to go sick and we cannot allow nationalization of industry that goes sick. That burden will not be taken by the public sector.

[Announcer] Twenty two.

[Reporter] Mr Prime minister, this is Prabhu from *Economic Times*. I would like to come back to the earlier questions asked to you which you said you would reply later, and that is about your periodic [words indistinct] whenever you go to the state capitals. Are they part of plan or not? If they are a part of the plan, what is new in your announcement. If it is a part of the plan, then why wasn't being announced? And if it is part of the plan, where does the money come from which you have announced?

[Gandhi interrupts] [Words indistinct] part of the plan.

[Reporter] There seems to be an impression that you are announcing these amounts in Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and wherever else you go impromptu, as if you are doing a favor to the state, if so, what will be your comment on this?

[Gandhi] Well, let me go back a little bit and come to how we arrived at this method of doing things. In my earlier tours starting with Madhya Pradesh, we found that there were many problems which were raised when I went on tour. And some were with the

state and some were with the center and some were state and center and they were hanging far and between and they were getting stuck because nobody was really putting their heads into it and solving them. Not because there was a real problem but because there was so much work that it has been relegated to a back burner and it was taking much more time than it was required. Then when I was in Arunachal, we discovered a lot of administrative problems. We cleared those in Arunachal. After Arunachal, I did a tour of Mizoram and there before the tour we thought that why don't we learn from what has happened in Madhya Pradesh, in Arunachal and preempt this thing, instead of arriving there and then not having the solution to the problems that were raised and then the problem continues because if it is then put back into the normal pipeline, it gets stuck again. So in Mizoram, we decided to reverse it. We said why don't we send a team from the center. We identified areas during my visit and areas means departments, specific projects, and said that these are the areas which need looking into and then a few weeks later I sent a team to Mizoram and they sat down with the Mizoram government and sorted out all the pending problems. After that when I was on a tour of Bengal, the chief minister, Jyoti Basu said the center never does anything, center is fixing us. So, I talked with him and I said look you keep feeling the center is fixing you, why don't you come to Delhi with your whole team or I come to Calcutta with a team and we will sit down and sort out all your problems. And before we actually come, we will have about 2 or 3 weeks of interaction between the state government and the central government to see which areas are pending and what can be done. So, this is what we did in Bengal and the result of that was that we produced a package of what is about 1,070 crores for Bengal. We then carried that model into Jammu-Kashmir, into Kerela, with Haryana and with other states also. Now where is the money come from? What is actually happening? There are a number of areas. Firstly, these are not, what did you say, largesse that we are distributing. It is not taken out of the blue and there is no money for it. There is money for it. These are all very hard projects. They come from a number of areas. There are three... No let me start. First is just a clearance of pending issues. Now they could have been stuck because a decision was not being taken. Not because nobody wanted to take the decision but because it was going through the normal pipeline. And when we put a deadline in a date and say okay the prime minister is going on such and such a date you must do it, then the administration gets up and actually does it. So things get done. Second is resolving differences between the state and the center. Here sometimes I have to intervene, chief minister has to intervene, we take a political decision and we solve the problem that's there. Sometimes there are problems between the central ministries and central agencies. We try and clear those problems. Sometimes it is a question of reordering priorities within a plan, which is within the plan but we can give a different priority, we do that. Sometimes it is reacting in reordering the priority. It is keeping in mind the priorities of the state government. A state government might have put certain priorities with the planning commission, but when we have a discussion with the chief minister he says no I don't want that, I would prefer to have it like this. For example, in Kerela, when we were talking about the railway lines, he accepted a compromise and we were able to increase the mileage by about 20 kilometers on the railway lines that they wanted. So this sort of compromise was available.

Then there is finance available from the plan. There is institutional finance which is available, which we helped to get for the state, which they sometimes don't get otherwise. Then there are cases where finance is lapsing. For example, this year the finance may be lapsing in the education ministry with navadaya vidyalaya [new schools] with kendra vidyalayas [central schools]. Now it is no use allowing that to lapse. If a particular state says yes, they will have another seven schools, we give them the seven schools. It is better than letting the money go to waste. Then there are cases for which there is no financial implication at all. So, what is really happening is it is a mix of some new projects, some projects which have been pending and got stuck, some reallocation of finance, some redirecting of finance, some directing finance which was to lapse, but the end result is that the state gets a dynamic package on which it can work and gets things going immediately.

[Reporter] Will you go to all the states like this?

[Gandhi] Yes I will.

[Reporter] In this case what happens to the policy-making body — the National Development Council. These are the methods normally considered...

[Gandhi interrupts] Well, you raised the question of the planning commission and the National Development Council is the chief ministers and the chief ministers in the planning commission interact every year on their plans. [Sentence as heard] In all these exercises the planning commission is fully involved, at the chairman's level and the deputy chairman — both.

[Announcer] Should we go on to Pakistan, we are running out of time?

[Gandhi] Let them do one or two on economics.

[Announcer] One or two more on economics.

[Dhaulpuri in Hindi] Dhaulpuri from *Dainik Sandesh*. Mr Prime minister, for last few years a fixed percentage is given to the official who is in charge of apprehending smugglers and other such offenders and enforce excise and customs legislations. Is it necessary to give this additional incentives to bureaucrats who already enjoy excellent salaries, and if the government can give a fixed percentage then the smugglers can outbid the government. Secondly, if we give it to the customs and excise officials, then the police or army could say that they should also reap the harvest of their operations. Do you agree with this, do you think this is the right policy of the government?

[Gandhi in Hindi] Yes, the policy is right and it is having a positive effect. The police are also being helped in a similar manner in Punjab. They get rewards for apprehending extremists. There is no contradiction in this.

[Dhaulpuri in Hindi] There is a difference in giving the award and fixed percentage. Award is given for bravery or some other good thing.

[Gandhi in Hindi] If a policeman kills an extremist whose head

carries a cash award, then he gets it.

[Dhaulpuri in Hindi] Yes, such cash awards are declared beforehand, but if one apprehends somebody and gets a percentage money then it his white money. Now is there any provision in our legislation?

[Gandhi in Hindi] Yes, this has been the practice for many years, and I think it is perfectly alright and there is no mistake in it.

[Announcer] One minute, ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem. This hall is required actually at 1100 for a meetiung of the Public Sector Enterprises Commission. That is at 1100. There are about 700 people waiting outside wanting to come in. We will have to end in about 5 to 6 minutes. So shall we move on to Pakistan, otherwise there will not be time. Yes, Pakistan and China were the second and third subjects which were mentioned, and Sri Lanka.

[Gandhi] Should we do foreign policy as a whole, because there is very little time if we start making divisions, it might not work.

[Reporter] On Sri Lanka, Mr Prime Minister, Some 2 months ago or 10 weeks ago [at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Summit] in Bangalore, the situation seemed to be showing up as a result of your discussions with Mr Jayewardene. Since then the situation has changed for the worse on the ground in Jaffna, some setback on the eastern districts. And today Mr Jayewardene complained that he is not getting the desired assistance from India. What do you think has gone wrong and what is the outlook?

[Gandhi] Well, I am at [word indistinct] as you are. Because on the 19 December, I think it was 19 December, we got a package from the Sri Lankan Government, from the president actually, which I am told was typed in this town, his typewriter, in his house, and then handed to us. Then we were told 2 days later that there are some problems and the whole package cannot be adhered. So then we got back to him. Then we were told no, no, no there are no problems, it can be adhered to. Then again there were questions raised in Sri Lanka whether it can be done or not. The latest thing we have been told again has a little bit of a question mark on it whether they are going to accept that or they are going to stand by it or they are not going to stand by it. We unfortunately can do nothing till we have a package which we know the Sri Lankan Government is going to stand by it. We cannot have a vascillating government and pretend that we will take this package to anyone or talk to anyone.

[Reporter] My question was on technology. Can I ask it?

[Gandhi] No, let us stick to the foreign policy.

[Reporter] Prime Minister, Rajen Sarma from *Tribune*, Chandigarh. Would you kindly sum up your views of the geostrategic situation developing in this region, particularly with reference to the efforts for a cease-fire in Afghanistan and the reported move to provide Stinger missles to the mujahidin fighting the Afghan Government.

[Gandhi] Well, to sum up the whole of geopolitical situation in Southeast [as heard] Asia will take me more than 4 minutes that we have got left. So I would like not to do half a job on that and, perhaps, on another occasion I will give you a full detail on that. On the specific question of Stinger missiles for Afghanistan, now we have brought it to the notice of the U.S. Government that a lot of the equipment that they are giving to Afghanistan is finding its way to our border. And, we feel that they must be much more careful about this.

[Announcer] 134, Mr Raghvan of *Blitz*.

[Raghvan] Prime Minister, between India and Pakistan we have been discussing for quite some years a friendship treaty. Now it appears the main hurdle to the finalization of the friendship treaty is Pakistan objection to inserting a clause in the treaty proclaiming the inadmissibility of establishing foreign bases in each other's territory. You must have seen very recently a former foreign secretary has gone on record as saying that Pakistan's involvement with the military activities of the United States in his country have gone too far; it is meaningless to discuss this friendship treaty any more. Would you like to care to comment on this.

[Gandhi] No, we would like to discuss the friendship treaty if all the clauses are acceptable and one of the clauses as you said is that on foreign bases, and we feel that if the security and stability is to be ensured in South Asia, then there should be no foreign bases or major power bases in South Asia, because it is with such bases that intervention, interference is heightened and tensions increased. But we would like to talk, we are talking with Pakistan. We have talked a lot with them. Sometimes the talks have been positive; sometimes not so positive. But on the ground we have seen very little progress and we are really watching it. We are willing to talk, we are willing, because that is the way to solve problems. If one breaks talks, then the solutions that are left are not happy solutions and we would like to have solutions across the table.

[Announcer] One hundred seventy four, Mr Narendra Reddy.

[Reddy] What [words indistinct] the Chinese intrusion in Sumdorong Valley and what you see their intention by strongly reacting on our making Arunachal Pradesh a state?

[Gandhi] Well, that wasn't a reaction to the Chinese, it was a reaction to my visit to Arunchal Pradesh and it had been pending since that time. We have been in touch with the Chinese regarding the intrusion to Sumdorong Valley. We have made some progress in talks with them. These problems are very, very complicated, and they have to be solved by talking with each other. And we hope that we will be able to solve them by talking with the Chinese.

[Announcer] One hundred eighty one, Mr Dua.

[Dua] S.K. Dua, *Hindustan Times*. Mr prime minister, seven rounds of talks have been held with the Chinese at official's level but they have not yielded any fruit, no progress on the boundary question. May I know whether your government is prepared to raise the question, raise the discussions to political level so that a high direction can be given to solving the border dispute with

China?

[Gandhi] We are prepared to raise to a higher level. But before it can be raised to a higher level, a lot of ground work will have to be done.

[Announcer] Eight two.

[Husaini] Mr prime minister, reports have appeared in Indian newspapers....

[announcer, interrupting] Better to identify your name so that others will know.

[Husaini] My name is Zahir Husaini, I represent the Pakistani daily *Jang*. Sir, reports have appeared in Indian newspapers alleging concentration of Pakistani forces on Indo-Pak border. Could you tell us what is the exact situation on borders, and this is just a propaganda campaign against Pakistan? My other question, when are you visiting Pakistan and what is the exact state of progress made toward normalization of relations?

[Gandhi] Well, first on the border question. It is not a propaganda issue. Our information is that after Pakistan's exercise — you have an annual exercise, which you carry out every October-November — after that exercise, the Pakistani forces did not withdraw like they normally withdraw and they have remained at the frontline position, which has caused us tremendous concern. We have not reciprocated so as not to heighten the tension and create a situation which might snowball, and we are trying to figure out why Pakistan has left its forces on our border. We are trying to get in touch with Pakistan with others to see what is the problem. We ourselves are having an exercise, which we hold once in 3 years, and because we hold it less often, it is a more extensive exercise, more comprehensive exercise. But this should be no problem to Pakistan. We have been in touch with the Pakistan Government at the correct levels. We have informed them of the exercise, and there should be no cause for worry.

[Husaini] When you are visiting Paksitan?

[Gandhi] At the moment, I have got no fixed plans for visiting Pakistan.

[Husaini] [The Pakistani] foreign secretary said you will be visiting Pakistan as the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] chairman.

[Gandhi] He will talk with the new foreign secretary soon.

[Husaini] New foreign secretary?

[Announcer] Sixty two.

[reporter]. Sorry, my question has been asked. I will pass that one.

[Announcer] I think we will really have to.

[Gandhi] I think we really have to have a last question. [laughter]

[Reporter] How many last questions?

[Gandhi] There seem to be too many last questions.

[Announcer] Fifty nine.

[Gandhi] Give it to someone who has not asked a question.

[Announcer] Yes, 59 has not yet.

[Unidentified reporter] Sir, in the light of ...

[Gandhi] Fifty-nine we agreed to.

[Ved Pratap Vedik in Hindi] I am from the PTI Hindi press service. Ved Pratap Vedik. Mr Prime Minister: Your government has welcomed the unilateral declaration of a cease-fire by Afghanistan. This could be a good thing. But it is surprising that, despite India's being a regional superpower in this region, we only welcome such events regarding Afghanistan or remain silent. We have not taken any initiative on this issue for the last 2 to 3 years. Four external affairs ministers have been appointed during your 2 years in power. How can a minister in only 6 months solve the Sri Lanka or Afghanistan problems? What are the reasons for your not holding direct talks with the Najib government or the Peshawar guerrillas or the Pakistani Government or the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union? Is it not surprising that while the American and Soviet leaders are holding talks in Islamabad, we are not taking any initiative in this connection? Do you have any intention to take any initiative ?

[Gandhi] No.

### Demonstration Held Before Sind Assembly

*BK221730 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu*
*1700 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Sind Chief Minister Syed Ghaus Ali Shah told newsmen in Karachi this evening that the provincial assembly's current session has been convened to review the province's present situation and to identify the causes of the recent incidents in Karachi and Hyderabad. He said that some elements do not like to see democracy prosper and are trying to worsen the situation. The chief minister said that members of a political party tried to obstruct the house proceedings and also incited women to demonstrate outside the National [as heard] Assembly to hinder the proceedings. They failed in their attempt, however, and the house completed its proceedings according to the agenda.

According to *Associated Press of Pakistan*, the chief minister said that 11 of the 12 provincial assembly members who had been arrested by the police this morning have been released in the afternoon.

In reply to a question, he said that they have been charged with obstructing the performance of the duties of the law enforcement agencies, disorderliness with members of these agencies, and inciting people to violate the law. He said that the people is the source of power and they are capable of containing such situations. Syed Ghaus Ali Shah said that he hopes that law-abiding citizens will assist the government's efforts to maintain peace and restore normalcy.

### Jailed Sind Leaders Named

*BK230317 Delhi Domestic Service in English*
*0240 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] In Pakistan, almost all opposition members of the Sind Assembly have been arrested following an hour-long demonstration by the Pakistan People's Party outside the assembly compound. They included Mr Hussain Haroon, Mr Niamatullah, Mr Junaid Sumro, and Mr Liaqat Jatoi, among others. They were taken into custody soon after the house began its winter session.

Earlier, Mr Haroon had threatened that the opposition would demand dissolution of the provincial assembly and holding of fresh elections if the government failed to fix responsibility for the treatment to women protestors in front of the assembly yesterday. He also strongly criticized the attitude of the police and the administration.

### 'No Change' in Stand on Soviet Afghan Withdrawal

*BK221604 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu*
*1500 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan is to visit the Soviet Union prior to the next round of UN-sponsored indirect talks on Afghanistan in Geneva. A Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today Pakistan hopes that the next round of indirect talks in Geneva on Afghanistan will be held next month, but the date may be adjusted to accommodate the convenience of the two parties. The spokesman said that the period between now and the commencement of the next Geneva round can be utilized positively in moving toward an acceptable and reasonable timeframe [for withdrawal of forces], which will result in the finalization of the settlement package at Geneva. There has been no change in Pakistan's stand that the withdrawal of Soviet forces should be within months.

About the talks with Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Kovalev during his recent visit, the spokesman said that the talks were aimed at achieving mutual understanding of each other's viewpoints. The spokesman clarified that Pakistan's viewpoint on Afghanistan is based on principles which have been accepted and supported by the international fraternity at all levels. Pakistan sincerely desires to [words indistinct] with the Soviet Union which will make the Soviet Union believe that Pakistan is really interested in an early political settlement of the Afghan issue.

U.S. Under Secretary of State Michael Armacost's visit reaffirmed continued U.S. support to Pakistan's efforts for an early settlement of the Afghan issue based on the accepted principles. The spokesman said that the negotiations between Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the United States have been extended and it is expected that this will help in accelerating the process of the Geneva talks for the settlement of the Afghan issue.

On the Iran-Iraq war, the spokesman said that Pakistan deeply regrets the continuation of this war and wishes to join the efforts of the Islamic summit to bring an end to it. Pakistan's stand on this dispute has always been balanced in the past and it will remain so in the future.

The spokesman described India's concern over the Pakistani armed forces' exercise as unwarranted. He said that India's allegation is aimed at diverting attention from its own large-scale massing of troops in Rajasthan near the Pakistani border. India is aware of regular Pakistani armed forces' exercises during the winter in (?common) areas. Therefore, concern is not justified.

### Protest Lodged on Afghan Airspace Violations

*BK221324 Karachi Domestic Service in English*
*1300 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] The Afghan charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Office in Islamabad today and a strong protest was lodged with (?him) over the air and ground violation of Pakistan's territories since the 15th of this month. Pakistan rejected a protest made by the Kabul authorities on Tuesday [20 January], alleging that a Pakistani aircraft violated Afghan airspace in the Zaraj area of Nimruz Province on the 9th of this month. The charge d'affaires was informed that the allegations have been investigated and found to be baseless.

## SRI LANKA

### Bomb Explosion on Bus Kills 7, Injures 50

*BK190329 Hong Kong AFP in English*
*0300 GMT 19 Jan 87*

[Text] Colombo, Jan 19 (AFP) — Seven people were killed and about 50 injured when a bomb exploded in a crowded bus in central Sri Lanka sunday [18 January], sources said Monday. The blast occurred near Badulla in centrl Uva district, 216 kilometers (135 miles) from here, a police spokesman told *Agence France-Presse*, adding that a large time bomb had apparently been placed in the rear of the bus minutes before it left the Badulla bus stand.

Sources said that the bus exploded at Kalana about eight kilometers (five miles) from the bus station killing five people. Two others died in hospital, and 50 other people were injured, the sources added. The explosion ripped the roof off the bus and fire engulfed the wreckage, the police spokesman said by telephone from badulla.

Police sources said that 15 of the injured were in hospital in Badulla with serious injuries. There was a serious shortage of blood and a public appeal has been made for blood donors, hospital sources said. A senior police source at Badulla alleged that the bus bomb had been planted by Tamil separatists who are waging a bloody campaign for a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

Reports from Badulla said that some villagers near the spot where the bus exploded had apprehended two Tamil youths believed to be connected with people who planted the bomb. The report said that the pair had been handed over to police. Ten of the injured were reported to be Tamils who worked on tea plantations around Badulla.

#### Security Minister Comments

*BK190823 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English*
*0738 GMT 19 Jan 87*

[Text] Colombo, Jan 19 (LANKA PUWATH) — National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali told *Lanka Puwath* today that the recent attacks by separatist terrorists on innocent Sri Lankan civilians including last evenings time bomb blast in a regional transport board bus at Badulla in the Uva Province clearly showed that the terrorists were not interested in a peaceful solution of the ethnic problem. Mr Athulathmudali also said that he had warned and advised for the last three months that all passengers boarding public vehicles should have their baggage examined.

Meanwhile, official sources told *Lanka Puwath* that yesterday's brutal time bomb massacre by terrorists at 1845 hours (local time) in a crowded bus which was playing from Badulla to Kuttigala had killed seven persons and wounded 59, 21 of them including six children had both their legs amputated.

Four of the dead were not recognizable.

The driver managed to jump off the bus in time.

Out of the 59 passengers wounded 12 were Tamils. While the others were Sinhalese.

Fifteen out of the 59 admitted to hospital were in in a critical condition.

The gangs of terrorists suspected of being responsible for the brutal massacre that took place last evening were LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] and the new terrorist gang, the Up Country Liberation Organisation (ULO).

#### Suspects Questioned

*BK201032 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English*
*0826 GMT 20 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/POOL"]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 20 (LANKA PUWATH) — A number of persons are being questioned by the police in connection with the time bomb explosion in the state owned regional trnsport board bus at Badulla, in Sri Lanka's hill country last Sunday evening which resulted in the death of seven persons and 59 being injured.

Fifteen of the wounded have had both their legs amputated official sources told *Lanka Puwath*.

Twelve others wounded are in a critical condition.

Meanwhile, the police reported the situation in Badulla was quiet.

At a meeting presided over by Badulla district minister yesterday it was decided to pay compensation ranging between rs. 50,000 to rs. 100,000 to the victims. In addition the Transport Board will pay rs. 5000 for funeral expenses.

### LTTE's Prabakaran Rallying 'Dwindling Support'

*BK191101 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English*
*1040 GMT 19 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/Pool" Item]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 19 (LANKA PUWATH) — Official sources told *Lanka Puwath* today that Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai who were forced to leave India after the terrorist camps were closed down is now in Mullaitivu, the northern district at the tip of the Jaffna Peninsula, in his campaign to rally the dwindling support he has with the LTTE cadres.

Sources said that Sri Lankan Tamil terrorist training camps in south India have closed down and several hundreds of terrorists have either returned to Sri Lanka or gone into hiding.

The training camps were closed down by Prabakaran and Balakumar of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students

(EROS) who work in collusion following a wave of anti-Sri Lankan terrorist feeling in Tamil Nadu which began with the murder of 24 year old undergraduate [passage indistinct] later precipitated by a series of rumors reported by *Lanka Puwath* claim that Sri Lankan terrorists have helped to train a number of south Indian youth in terrorism including expertise in explosive devices.

## Further Reports on 'Terrorist' Activities

### Fires Set in Jaffna

*BK201125 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 1030 GMT 20 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/POOL" Item]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 20 (LANKA PUWATH) — Separatist terrorists set fire to the Weerasingham Hall and the post office in the Jaffna town, northern Sir Lanka this morning.

The media center in Colombo told that the terrorists have committed this crime in order to accuse the security forces. However, security forces were no where near these two buildings at the time of the incident.

### Roundup of 'Terrorist' Activity

*BK221015 Colomob LANKA PUWATH in English 0837 GMT 22 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/POOL" Item]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 22 (LANKA PUWATH) — One terrorist was killed when security forces opened fire at a gang of terrorists who attacked the Jaffna Fort Army camp in Northern Sri Lanka with mortars yesterday, official sources told *Lanka Puwath*.

Meanwhile the media centre said that terrorists belonging to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Tamil Eelam Army (TEA) gangs fired 11 mortars from the direction of telecommunication building and the chest clinic area situated to the north of the Jaffna Fort.

At Point Pedro last morning a security force [illegible] patrol destroyed a terrorist bunker which was set up amidst a grove of palmyra trees.

Three claymore mines, 10 hand grenades and holodten lamps and fluorescent tubes were recovered from the scene.

Meanwhile, terrorists set off a few explosive charges near the Kayts Island and also fired at an naval patrol craft.

In another incident at Chavakachcheri last Friday six armed terrorists entered the water supply and drainage board stores forcibly and took away all the pipes worth rs. 300,000.

The watcher who tried to prevent the terrorists from entering the store was shot and wounded.

These PVC pipes are used by the terrorists to manufacture mortars.

### 5 Dead in Jaffna Fighting

*BK221258 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 5 people including 4 civilians and a militant were killed and 11 injured in fresh fighting between the Sri Lankan army and Tamil militants in Jaffna Town yesterday. A military spokesman said in Colombo today that the victims were caught in cross firing when they tried to flee the militants' shelling. There was no casualty for the army.

Meanwhile, normal life was paralyzed throughout the eastern Batticaloa District today as people observed a 2-day hartal [strike] to express sympathy and solidarity with the Tamils living in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

### 4 Servicemen Killed in Attacks

*BK221207 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 1108 GMT 22 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/POOL"]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 22 (LANKA PUWATH) — Four servicemen were killed by separatist terrorist acts today in three separate incidents. The media centre in Colombo told *Lanka Puwath* that in the Mannar District, North West Sri Lanka, a security force patrol was caught up in a landmine explosion and a serviceman, K.R. Premadasa was killed.

At Point Pedro, Northern Sri Lanka another security force patrol was caught up in a landmine explosion and two servicemen identified as Army Sergeant H.K.R. Sarath Chandra and Private K.K. Harischandra were killed. At the Jaffna Fort, Second Lieutenant D.R.W. Dahanayake of Handessa, Peradeniya was killed when a terrorist sniper fired at him from the cover of a building within the 1000 yards security zone.

### 'Terrorists' Promised Safety

*BK221203 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0732 GMT 22 Jan 87*

["LANKA PUWATH/OANA/POOL" item]

[Text] Colombo, Jan 22 (LANKA PUWATH) — A number of terrorists belonging to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] and the EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] groups have surrendered to the security force commanders in Battticaloa, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu and Killinochchi the media centre in Colombo told *Lanka Puwath* today. Their names are witheld for their own security. They are being brought down to Colombo and are in charge of several district ministers who are entrusted with the task of looking after the welfare and security of these ex-terrorists.

These ex-terrorists say that internal conflicts leading to the killing of their own members as well as the hopelessness of the struggle for a separate state have led them to give up arms and surrender. The government and the minister for national security assures that all militants or former terrorists who are willing to lay down arms and seek refuge with the police and the security forces in any district will be well treated, looked after and assured of their safety. This applies even to the members of their families.

**Troops Capture 8 'Terrorists'**

*BK230757 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0703 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Colombo, Jan 23 (LANKA PUWATH) troops on patrol captured eight separatist terrorists from the Akkajaipattu, [Words indistinct] areas in the Batticaloa District, eastern Sri Lanka last Wednesday, the media centre in Colombo told *Lanka Puwath*. The captured terrorists beloinged to the EELAM Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) gangs.

### Velayati Letter on Iran's Refusal to Attend ICO

*LD231122 Tehran IRNA in English 1105 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — Iran's foreign minister has told his Kuwaiti counterpart that Kuwait's proximity to the war zone in southern Iraq has turned the country to an unsuitable and insecure venue for the upcoming OIC summit and that "naturally, under these circumstances, the conference will not be able to study the Islamic world's important issues, particularly the Iraqi invasion of Iran and the need to punish the aggressor."

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah has extended an invitation to his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati to attend the Kuwait-hosted summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to which Velayati has responded that "Iran will not send any delegation to the conference."

In the letter to his Kuwaiti counterpart, Velayati enumerated the Islamic Republic of Iran's reasons for not taking part in the Kuwait summit.

The foreign minister said in his letter that Kuwait had failed to give a suitable response to "our good-will in establishing healthy and friendly relations with you as a member of the group of states in the strategic Persian Gulf region."

Velayati said to this end Iran had sent a number of delegations to Kuwait and stressed that this cooperation could be an important criterion in establishing security and stability in the region.

Instead, he said, the Kuwaiti officials adopted the wrong policy of supporting the aggressor thus paving the way for the Baghdad regime to continue its aggression and its attacks on Iran's civilian areas and economic centers.

"You put your ports at the disposal of Iraq for shipment of destructive arms, you sell oil in favor of Iraq, and you provide political and propaganda support for this war-mongering regime," Velayati told his Kuwaiti counterpart.

The foreign minister also said that the constant traffic of Iraqi jet fighters and ships over the airspace and coastal waters of Kuwait raises question about Kuwait's sovereignty and independence and "make us doubtful about its being secure."

### Musavi: Hostages 'Not Related' to Withheld Assets

*LD211047 Tehran IRNA in English 1042 GMT 21 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Prime Minister Hoseyn Musavi said here Wednesday that the United States should not link verdicts of the Hague to the American hostages in Lebanon. Speaking at the end of a meeting of cabinet ministers, Musavi said the hostage issue had nothing to do with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Recent statements of American officials might affect credibility of the Hague, the premier added.

The whole world knows that the Islamic Republic of Iran will do all within its power to attain what is legally and rightfully hers and that it has the power to materialise its long-term or short-term goals. "The issue of the hostages is not related to the U.S. debts and assets to Iran which should be delivered to the Islamic Republic," Musavi said.

He stressed that the issue of the American hostages in Lebanon is relevant to groups inside Lebanon and to the U.S. Mid-East policies.

Therefore, he added, it could not be related to the rights of Iran which have been materialised on the basis of international regulations.

During the cabinet meeting, chaired by the prime minister, Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs Mohammad Javad Iravani reported on the financial status of the government during the past four months.

### Velayati Discusses Visit to SFRY, Libya

*NC200929 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 20 Jan 87*

[Text] Foreign Minister Velayati returned to Tehran last night after a visit to the SFRY and Libya. Following his arrival, he spoke with a Central News Unit correspondent on the outcome of his visit.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Mr Velayati, please provide us with some of the details of your visit to the SFRY and Libya for the benefit of our listeners.

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. During our meetings with SFRY officials, we held positive talks on expanding bilateral relations in the political, economic, and commercial fields. It was confirmed that the SFRY minister of economics will visit Iran at the beginning of next year [Iranian or Gregorian calendar not specified] to set up an Iran-SFRY joint commission. In addition to bilateral issues, we discussed cooperation between our two countries on an international scale, focusing particular attention on respective stands toward Nonaligned Movement members. We reviewed regional problems and the facts pertaining to the upcoming ICO session, including our reason for not attending it.

We then traveled to Libya from the SFRY. In view of the current fact-breaking developments in the Persian Gulf region and in Lebanon, Northern Africa, and Chad, it was essential for us to consult with our Libyan brothers. We briefed them on the situation at the warfronts and declared our steadfast determination to continue fighting until the Iraqi ruling clique's downfall.

Our Libyan brothers informed us of the events in Chad and the difficulties created by the foreign powers' aggression and interference there. We support the Libyans because they support us in our belief that African problems should be solved by Africans and that foreign powers outside Africa should not be permitted to interfere in the affairs of the continent.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much. [end recording]

## USSR Envoy Hands Velayati Message on USSR Visit

*LD221108 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*1030 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] According to a central news unit report, this morning Mr Velayati, minister of foreign affairs, received Mr Boldyrev, the Soviet ambassador in Tehran. In this meeting, which took place at the request of the Soviet ambassador, he submitted the message of Mr Shevardnadze, Soviet foreign minister, about Mr Velayati's impending [qarib al-voqu'] visit to the Moscow.

In this meeting the Soviet ambassador strongly denied the remarks attributed to his country's envoy to the United Nations and described them as contrary to the positions of the Soviet Union, being fabricated by imperialist media. The Soviet ambassador also emphasized the serious intentions of the officials of his country to expand and improve relations and bilateral cooperation in various fields.

According to the same report, Mr Velayati, while explaining the positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed his hope to visit the Soviet Union at an appropriate time.

## 100,000 More Men To Go To War Fronts Soon

*LD191300 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*1030 GMT 19 Jan 87*

[Text] The Central News Unit reports: In the wake of statements made by Grand Ayatollah Montazeri and repeated requests by the hezbollah ummah, the second grand dispatch of 100,000 men, part of the 20 million-man army, is to take place in the blessed 10 days of Fajr [beginning 1 February]. It is called Mahdi, peace be upon him, Corps.

### Volunteers Sent to Fronts

*LD201300 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*1030 GMT 20 Jan 87*

[Text] In order to continue the victories of the combatants of Islam on the front, and in response to the atrocities of the Zionist enemy, attacking residential areas, the dispatch of volunteer forces to the battlefields has increased particularly from those regions which have been attacked by the Iraqi regime. In this connection, correspondents of the Central News Unit have dispatched some reports on the departure of combat specialist forces from the Provinces of Gilan, Sistan Va Baluchestan and the cities of Qom and Kashan. We draw your attention to these reports:

This morning, the 13th convoy of Karbala' marchers from Gilan province, comprising 13 fresh combat specialist battalions, the redispatched and trained troops from the cities of Rasht, Rudbar, Anzali, Lahijan, Langrud, Rudsar, Sowme'ehsara, Fuman, Talesh, Astara, Astaneh-e Ashrafiyeh and other regions of Gilan Province, left for the battlefronts of the war of justice against injustice. According to a report from the Central News Unit correspondent in Rasht, the dear selfless volunteers, before leaving for the front, staged a glorious march. They chanted enemy-crushing and revolutionary slogans, including "Death to the USA," "Death to Israel," "Death to Saddam," "The Qods Division of Gilan is going to Karbala'," "Death to Saddam," "The Qods Division of Gilan is going to Karbala'," "Our victorious Forces are Waiting to Attack Again," and "Karbala' is yearning to Receive the Army of God's soul" [Khomeyni's] In doing so, they demonstrated their firm resolve to continue the war until the complete annihilation of the Ba'thist-Zionist regime ruling over Iraq and until the eradication of the enemies of Islam and the Islamic Revolution. Afterwards, members of the convoy and the battle-ready forces, passed under the Koran Arch, leaving Rasht for the battlefields of struggle against the enemy, amidst an unprecedented enthusiastic send-off from the martyr-rearing and heroic people of Gilan province. This was a report from the Central News Unit in Rasht.

Simultaneous with the 7th day of martyrdom of the heroes killed during the air raid on the holy city of Qom by the Ba'thist-Zionist regime, this morning the third convoy of vanguards of the corps of Mohammad — may God's salutations and benedictions be upon him and his scion — with the estimated strength of four battalions, comprising the specialist combat forces, the redispatched and trained mobilization warriors from the Guards Corps of Qom named the Revenge-seekers for the Blood of Qom Martyrs, accompanied by a battalion of the clergy from Qom seminary, left for the battlefronts of the war against the Ba'thist enemy. As they left, they chanted slogans of "War, War Until Victory," "We are in Love with Husayn," and "We are Khomeyni's soldiers," "We are in love with Karbala' and we are heading for the front," and "O Karbala, Mohammad's corps is Coming, is Coming," left for the battlefronts of the war against the Ba'thist enemy. [passage omitted]

This morning, two combat battalions of the popular volunteer forces of the town of Kashan, organized in the third phase of dispatching corps of Mohammad — may God's salutations and benedictions be upon him and his scion — marched in this town's streets. While they marched, they chanted the crushing slogan of "War, War Until Victory." Then they left for the battlefronts, to continue the relentless battle against the defeated forces of the Zionist Saddam, side by side with other defenders of Islam. This report was from the Central News Unit in Kashan.

The third convoy of the corps of Mohammad — may God's salutations and benedictions be upon him and his scions — comprising two battalions of fresh mobilization forces of the Shi'ite and Sunni warriors, the trained and redispatched forces of the Labbayk [Labbayk ya Khomeyni] from the cities of Zabol, Zahedan, Khash, Iranshahr, and Chahbahar, this morning left for the battlefronts. They were given an enthusiastic send-off from the Hezbollahi people of Zahedan. This report was from the Central News Unit in Zahedan.

According to the Central News Unit, at midday today, the third convoy of the corps of Mohammad — may God's salutations and benedictions be upon him and his scion — comprising over one battalion of the battle-hardened and redispatched specialist combat forces, left the towns of Minab, Rudan and Bandar-e Khamir amidst an enthusiastic send-off from the people of these regions.

Yesterday, one battalion of the Islamic Revolution Committee and one battalion of the specialist combat forces from Khorasan Province, left Mashhad for the battlefronts of the imposed war.

### More Volunteers Depart

*NC210727 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 21 Jan 87*

[Excerpts] The Third Convoy of the Muhammad Corps from Yazd Province — May God's benediction and blessing be upon the prophet and his scion — which consists of four combat specialist battalions, left for the country's operational zones yesterday afternoon. [passage omitted]

According to a Central News Unit report, a large number of volunteer forces from the Islamic Republic Guards' Corps left for the battlefronts from the resistance bases of central Zarand, (Nowbaran) and (Gharqan) in Saveh District. The group consists of two combat specialist battalions, as well as redeployed and support troops, under the name of the Third Convoy of the Muhammad Corps.

A Central News Unit report notes that a battalion of student volunteers from Mahabad District schools also left for the fronts of right versus wrong. Another battalion of redeployed forces from [name indistinct] left to join the Third Convoy of the Muhammad Corps at the fronts of the imposed war yesterday. Two combat specialist battalions from the Islamic Revolution Guards' Corps mobilization units in the Khoy District left yesterday for the fronts of light versus dark.

### 31 'Fresh' Battalions Depart

*LD211639 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Jan 87*

[Summary] This morning, 31 fresh specialist-combat battalions left the cities of Esfahan, Arak, and Chalus and the Province of Hormozgan for the battlefronts, amid enthusiastic send-off of martyr-nurturing inhabitants of these regions.

### Iraqi Mujahidin Play 'Key Role'

*LD211811 Tehran IRNA in English 1506 GMT 21 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Iraqi mujahidin are playing a key role in purging their Islamic homeland of Ba'thist troops in the ongoing Karbala'-5 operations in Shalamcheh region, said a statement released by the military wing of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) here Wednesday. Addressing the Muslim world, the statement vowed that Iraqi mujahidin along with Iranian Muslim forces would continue their struggle against the Iraqi Ba'thist regime until the just demands of the oppressed Iraqi people are met.

SAIRI also invited families of martyred Iraqi combatants to participate in a ceremony Thursday, marking the despatch of the third batch of the Mohammad (SAW) corps which is exclusively made up of Iraqi mujahidin. The second batch of Iraqi mujahidin had departed for the war fronts on January 19.

Iraqi mujahidin fighting side-by-side with their Iranian Muslim brethren have participated in four major operations against the Iraqi Ba'thist troops.

### Opposition on War Casualties

*JN220735 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 21 Jan 87 p 1*

[Text] Amman (J.T.) — The Khomeyni regime's recent adventure in the Iran-Iraq war — the so-called "Karbala 5" offensive — has left at least 50,000 casualties on the Iranian side since it began on Jan. 9, according to latest reports from Iran, the office of the Iranian Mujahidin opposition group in Paris said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The wounded are so numerous that many are abandoned at the fronts to die, and hospitals in most Iranian cities are overcrowded with the wounded from the fronts," the Mujahidin statement said. "These include more than 100 hospitals and clinics in Tehran and all the hospitals in cities such as Esfahan, Shiraz, Qom, Mashhad, Kerman (south-central Iran), Arak (central Iran), Tabriz, Sari and Qa'emshahr (both in the north). Ordinary patients have been discharged to make room for the war wounded," the statement added. A copy of the statement was received by telex by the *Jordan Times* yesterday.

"Following the defeat of the "Karbala 4" offensive and with the Islamic summit in Kuwait approaching, the Khomeyni regime badly needs a military victory," the statement said. "It is in the pursuit of such a victory that the regime has sent the majority of Guards corps divisions and brigades from different parts of the country to the front, many of which have been destroyed until now. Khomeyni has issued a secret Fatwa (religious decree) forbidding any return from the front, even on leave."

"Because of its manpower shortages at the front," the statement said, "the Khomeyni regime has once again resumed the arrest of citizens on the streets and their forced dispatch to the front. A committee has been set up in the Ministry of Education to co-ordinate the forced dispatch of schoolchildren to the front. At present, 60 per cent of the regime's forces at the front are made up of 11 to 16 year old schoolchildren."

The statement added: "Mr Mas'ud Rajavi, chairman of the National Council of Resistance called on the people of Iran, and particularly the patriotic personnel of the regular armed forces, to frustrate the regime's warlike mobilisation drives by refusing to go to the front. Mr. Rajavi also asked all international bodies and peace-loving governments to spare no effort to bring an end to this devastating war, particularly the bombing, missile attacks and shelling of civilian areas, whose victims are innocent men, women and children."

### 25 Iraqi Brigades Smashed

*LD220930 Tehran IRNA in English 0803 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Jan. 22, IRNA — Out of the 100 Iraqi brigades in Karbala'-5 operational region, 25 have been smashed, said the head of the War Information Headquarters (WIH), Kamal Kharrazi, here Thursday.

Speaking in a press conference with Foreign and Domestic reporters, Kharrazi said that casualties and losses of the enemy in the ongoing Karbala'-5 operations, launched Jan. 9, were far

more than the Val-Fajr-8 operations which resulted in liberation of the Iraqi port city of Al-Faw.

The objective of the operations, he told reporters, was to crush the war machine of the enemy. Once this is materialised, the WIH head said, not only Basra but Baghdad too will be an easy target.

The capture of hundreds of the personnel of 48 Iraqi brigades in the Karbala'-5 theater by the Iranian forces was an indication of the extent of casualties and losses inflicted on Iraqi troops, Kharrazi said.

The WIH head said that the Karbala'-5 operations were launched simultaneously amidst extensive propaganda of Iraq which said its forces had defeated Iranian combatants and that Ba'thist troops were able to confront the Muslim forces.

Dr. Kharrazi added that the Karbala'-5 operations were launched shortly after and near the Karbala'-4 and that severe blows were dealt on Iraqi troops.

He noted that the main goal of the Karbala'-5 operations was to destroy the Iraqi war machine and that the operational theater has become a graveyard for the enemy.

The operations were a testimony to the high combat pwoer of Iran's Muslim forces and proved they were fully capable of launching surprise assaults against Iraqi troops, and inflicting shattering blows on them whenever they wish. he said.

The WIH head added that casualties and losses inflicted on the Ba'thist Iraqi troops in the first week of the Karbala'-5 operations were much more than enemy life and equipment losses in the Val Fajr-8 operations launched by Iranian combatants in Al-Faw Peninsula in February.

Over 50 percent of 15 Iraqi brigades as well as less than 50 percent of 30 other enemy brigades were destroyed in the Karbala'-5 operations which is indicative of high Iraqi casualty toll, he said.

Elsewhere in his interview, Kharrazi said that the destruction of so many Iraqi brigades in the surprise Iranian assault had forced the Baghdad regime to call up all its troops, even more distant fronts, and rush them to the Karbala'-5 theater, without allowing them to get acquainted with the region or the situation of the Iranian forces.

Kharrazi quoted some captured Iraqi commanders as acknowledging that they had neither been familair with the region nor had they studied a map of the operational theater prior to their despatch.

He also quoted the captured Iraqi commander of Brigade 94 as saying that he was a retired officer who had been recalled by the army and sent to the region, despite the fact his knowledge of the operational theater was scant.

"The Karbala'-5 operations are aimed at destroying the Iraqi war machine and not capturing the southern Iraqi city of Basra." he said it was not difficult for the Iranian combatants to capture Basra. "Once the Iraqi war machine is demolished then the capture of not only Basra but other Iraqi cities including Baghdad will be easy."

Some 33,000 Iraqi troops were killed or wounded and 2,235 POW's taken, among them two brigadier generals, 10 colonels, 10 majors, 145 officers and 600 non-commissioned officers (NCO's) who were transferred to safe places behind the fronts, he said.

Dr. Kharrazi added that about 500 Iraqi tanks and armoured personnel carriers were destroyed and 150 others seized intact, and instantly deployed against Ba'thist forces in the Karbala'-5 operational region.

Three hundred Iraqi military vehicles were demolished and 300 others seized intact by Iran's Muslim forces since January 9, Kharrazi added.

The WIH head also noted that a large amount of Iraqi military equipment including artillery pieces and mortar launchers were either destroyed or seized in the successful Karbala'-5 operations.

The Muslim combatants of Iran have in fact turned the Karbala'-5 operational region into a theater in which Iraqi military equipment is seized or destroyed and enemy soldiers killed, wounded and captured, Kharrazi added.

On the activities of the anti-aircraft units of the Muslim forces in the Karbala'-5 operational theater, Kharrazi said that about 60 Iraqi jet fighters were shot down by Iranian surface-to-air fire in the region.

The interview was attended by over 40 foreign journalists, photographers and camermen from China, Turkey, Japan, France, U.S., Canada, Britain, Italy, Australia, Norway and Iceland.

Commenting on the escalating Iraqi air and missile attacks on Iranian residential areas, Kharrazi said that the Baghdad Government has resorted to these inhuman acts at a time when its forces are being annihilated on the battlefields.

Iran considers the war of the cities as a 'Dishonor to the spirit of warfare', Kharrazi said "Iran is shelling important Iraqi military-industrial centers as a deterrent measure despite the resources and ability to retaliate Iraqi bombing of Iranian cities more strongly."

The WIH head reiterated that it was the Iraqi regime which initiated the war of the cities, cowardly bombing Iranian civilian areas, simultaneously with the Iranian Karbala'-5 operations, obviously due to the defeats it suffered at the war fronts.

The Islamic Republic does not want the Iraqi people to be hurt in Iranian reprisal air, missile and artillery attacks, which were solely aimed at forcing the Iraqi regime to discontinue its atrocities, he said.

Kharrazi said, "Iran will cease its retaliatory attacks on Iraqi military, economic and industrial targets as soon as Iraq stops its

air and missile attacks on Iranian civilian areas."

It is quite obvious that the Baghdad Government's unwise strategy of bombing iranian cities has utterly failed. He cited the departure of multitudinous volunteers for the fronts from the very same cities bombed by Iraqi warplanes as a glowing example.

Asked whether Iran planned to shell and empty Basra of its population in order to put pressure on the Baghdad regime, Kharrazi said that Iran would definitely not do such things. People of Basra are sympathizers of the Islamic Republic, he added.

Questioned whether the Western Iranian city of Naft-e Shah has been liberated in the Karbala'-5 operations or not, Kharrazi replied that the operations was aimed at routing Iraqi troops and recapturing regional heights. Liberation of Naft-e Shah was not its objective, he added.

The WIH head also denied any connection between the Karbala'-5 operations and the upcoming summit meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) due to be held in Kuwait January 26, however he made clear that the proximity between the Karbala'-5 operational theater and Kuwait borders proves that Kuwait is certainly not a safe venue for the conference.

Responding to another question as to the connection between the Karbala'-5 operations and the final Iranian offensive, the WIH head said that the Karbala'-5 operations were aimed at paving the ground for other Iranian assaults.

In reply to another question whether the Karbala'-5 operations were launched by the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) or the Army, the WIH head said that the operations were launched by the IRGC ground forces backed by the air force, army aviation service (Havaniruz), and artillery units of the army.

On the use of Kuwaiti territory by the Iraqi forces in their attacks on Iran, Kharrazi said that the Islamic Republic pities the Kuwaiti Government which has been forced miserably to back the Baghdad regime.

Kharrazi quoted Kuwaiti officials' statements acknowledging their inability to prevent Iraqi warplanes from flying over Kuwait's air-space because of their high altitude. He said, "Since our patience is running thin we proposed the Kuwaiti Government to clarify its stand on the Islamic Republic."

The Islamic Republic has even proposed to the Kuwaiti Government that Iran will help protect its airspace because of its inability to do so itself, Kharrazi said.

Asked whether Iran would launch a reprisal attack if Kuwait's support for Iraq as well as the use of Kuwaiti airspace by Iraqi warplanes continued, he said that at the moment Iran has warned Kuwait to adopt an impartial stand. "Our duty will be very clear if Kuwait continues to support Iraq," he added.

He noted that once the Iraqi war machine is destroyed, small countries of the region would lose their hope in the Baghdad Government, and come to realize that it would be no use supporting the Baghdad regime any more.

### More on WIH Press Conference

*LD230220 Tehran IRNA in English 0210 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, OANA-IRNA — The Muslim combatants of Iran have badly mauled the Iraqi war machine in the ongoing Karbala'-5 operations, completely destroying 25 out of 100 brigades deployed by the Ba'thist enemy, said the head of the War Information Headquarters, Dr. Kamal Karrazi, Thursday.

Addressing a crowded press conference attended by foreign and domestic reporters at Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan Province, Kharrazi said that the southern fronts proved to be a virtual death-trap for the aggressor Iraqi regime.

15 Iraqi brigades suffered more than 50 percent destruction while 30 others sustained varying degrees of damage, revealed the WIH head. Over 33,000 casualties were inflicted on the enemy and the 2235 POWshave so far been transferred behind the lines which includes an impressive array of 2 brigadier-generals, 10 colonels, 10 majors, 145 officers and 600 NCOs, disclosed Dr. Kharrazi.

The battlefield littered with 500 tanks, and armoured personnel carriers as well as 300 other other vehicles, destroyed by the Muslim combatants has surpassed the havoc wrought on Iraqi soldiers and equipment during the liberation of Al-Faw in February 1986, said Dr. Kharrazi.

The WIH Head added that 150 tanks and armoured personnel carriers as well as 300 vehicles were seized intact from the enemy in these operations. In addition 60 Iraqi planes have been blasted over the skies at the southern fronts said Kharrazi.

The most surmounting obstacles around heavily fortified Basra have been overcome by the Muslim combatants which is a testimony to their valour noted Kharrazi.

Answering a reporter the WIH head said that the object of the Karbala'-5 operations is not to empty Basra, of its inhabitants, because these oppressed Iraqis are sympathizers of the Islamic Republic.

"Once the Iraqi war machine is put out of order not only Basra but other Iraqi cities including the capital Baghdad, will be easy" remarked Dr. Kharrazi.

The interview was attended by over 40 foreign journalists photographers and cameramen from China, Britain, Italy, Turkey, Japan, France, Canada, U.S., Norway, Australia, and Iceland.

"Iraq has dishonoured the very spirit of war" said Dr. Kharrazi referring to the cowardly air sound [as received] missile attacks of the battered Ba'thists on Iranian cities, including holy Qom. Unable to match the prowess of the Islamic combatants, it has perpetrated these brutal crimes, he added.

Despite the power and ability to realitate Baghdad in its own coin, the Islamic Republic has magnimously refrained from stooping to such low acts said Dr. Kharrazi. As a detterent measure Iran has targetted industrial and military centres in Iraqi cities, because it is not fighting the Iraqi people, he noted.

Dr. Kharrazi said further that Karbala'-5 operations is a prelude to Iran's final offensive.

Questioned whether the Karbala'-5 was in any [way] connected to the ICO summit to be held in Kuwait, Kharrazi replied in the negative. However he made it clear that the proximity of the war zone to Kuwaiti borders proves that Kuwait is certainly not a safe venue for the ICO meet.

The WIH chief concluded the press meet stressing that once the Iraqi war machine is shattered, the small regional sta'e would definitely have second thoughts on backing the Ba'thist rulers of Iraq.

### Iraqi Battalion 'Routed'

*LD221451 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] A Central News Unit correspondent has dispatched a report on last night's infiltration operations of the combatants of Islam. We now draw your attention to this report:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Keep fighting until there is no sedition. [Koranic verse] Oh you selfless people, the combative ummah! In response to the atrocities of the Zionist enemy and its attack on our country's residential areas, last night the mighty warriors of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran launched an infiltration operation, aimed at destroying the troops and crushing the defense lines of the 2d Corps of the Iraqi mercenary army in the Khanaqin operational sector. One battalion of Saddam's duped forces was routed.

During this courageous battle, employing mountain war tactics, the zealous warriors of the liberating army of Islam, defused enemy mines and booby traps, cut their barbed wires, and crossed the hard terrain. Within the first few moments of the attack they succeeded in achieving their predetermined objectives and delivered deadly blows to the enemy.

During the victorious attack, supported by intense fire from the combatants of Islam's artillery and mortar units and other light and heavy weapons fire, more than 250 Ba'thist aggressors were killed or wounded and the remaining Iraqi forces deployed in this region fled.

Also during these operations, dozens of bunkers, foxholes, and weapons emplacements of the Iraqi mercenary army were destroyed. Four ammunition depots and three enemy vehicles were set on fire and the enemy infantry and armored units suffered heavy blows.

Following these victorious operations, the heavy traffic of enemy ambulances in the city of Khanaqin and its suburbs indicates that the enemy suffered heavy blows. At present, exchange of fire continues in the sector with the warriors of Islam having superiority. The ever-vigilant forces of Islam are monitoring every enemy movement.

### 21-22 Jan Operations Reviewed

*LD221510 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] According to reports received from Khatem ol-Anbiya' base, the blasphemy-crushing forces of Islam, in the course of last night and today, while mopping up the palm groves in the east of Basra in the "Karbala' 5" offensive operational zone and reinforcing their new positions on the other side of the Du'ayji township and Jasim River, fired heavily on the concentrations, positions and equipments of the Iraqi forces and inflicted losses and casualties upon the Zionist enemy. Also, in some clashes in one of the axes in the operational zone, the fighters of Islam succeeded in killing or wounding hundreds of the forces of the Zionist enemy and set fire to a number of their tanks and personnel carriers and destroyed them.

According to the same report, this morning two other aircraft of the Zionist enemy were hit by the fire of the forces of Islam over the operational zone and were downed. Thus the number of aircraft of the Zionist enemy which have been downed so far in "Karbala' 5" offensive operational zone has reached 55.

At the moment, while having full control over the operational zone, the fighters of Islam have the Zionist enemy positions under observation, and with heavy artillery and tank fire have prevented the enemy from moving.

### Communique 2744 on Bombing

*LD221634 Tehran IRNA in English 1620 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — Iranian jet fighters heavily bombed military and industrial centers of the Iraqi cities of 'Amadiyah and Miqdadiyah at 08:40 and 09:52 GMT Thursday. The fighters returned safely to bases, said a military communique here Thursday. Joint Staff Communique Number 2744 said that excellent air-cover was provided for advancing Iranian forces in the Karbala'-5 operational theaters by Iranian fighter bombers which heavily bombed Iraqi positions and troop concentrations sites twice Thursday. The fighters returned safely after successfully carrying out the bombing missions.

Iranian long range artillery fire continued pounding Iraqi military and economic centers along side the eastern Iraqi borders Wednesday inflicting substantial casualties and losses on them. Heavy damage and casualties were reportedly inflicted on enemy military and economic targets in the northeastern Iraqi cities of Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, Seyyed Sadeq, Halabjah and Khormal [name as received] by Iranian long range artillery fire.

Exchange of artillery fire continued throughout the fronts Wednesday raging somewhat more heavily in Naft-e Shah theater as a result of which Iraqi forces sustained substantial casualties and losses in each front. Four Iraqi vessels which appeared in the Khawr 'Abdallah waterway at the northern tip

of the Persian Gulf wednesday were forced to flee by Iranian gunboats and coastal artillery fire, the communique concluded.

**2 More Iraqi Planes Downed**
*LD221636 Tehran IRNA in English 1610 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — Two more Iraqi warplanes were shot down by the fire of the Iranian air defence units stationed in the Karbala'-5 operational region Thursday afternoon. This brought to 57 the number of enemy planes downed since the start of the victorious Karbala'-5 offensive, January 9.

No report was immediately available on the fate of pilots of the downed planes, which had attempted to bombard residential areas of Ahvaz, capital of southern Province of Khuzestan.

Six other Iraqi fighter planes have been downed over the Karbala'-6 theatre since the operation began on January 13.

**Iraqis Bomb Dezful, Hamadan**
*LD221716 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] According to a Central News Unit report, at 1445 and 1643 today a number of residential parts of the city of Dezful were subjected to an air raid by aircraft of the Iraqi Ba'thist Zionist regime as a result of which a number of people were either martyred or wounded and a number of houses were damaged.

Similarly, according to a Central News Unit report from Hamadan at 1619 today a number of aggressor Iraqi aircraft intruded into Hamadan's air space, bombing a number of residential parts of that city and either martyring or wounding a number of defenseless men, women and children.

**Iraqi Air Raids Kill 212**
*LD221921 Tehran IRNA in English 1829 GMT 22 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan 22, IRNA — At least 212 civilians were martyred and 644 others wounded in the latest Iraqi raids on residential areas of the Iranian cities of Borujerd, Doroud [spelling as received], Khorramabad, Malayer, Pole Dokhtar, Zanjan, Tabriz, Dezful, Eslamabad-3 Gharb, Nahavand and Hamedan as well as a village in West Azrbayjan on Thursday.

A mosque and two schools were among the sites bombed by Iraqi warplanes which also violated the airspace of Arak, Ilam, Sar Dasht and Qom Thursday breaking the sound barrier.

In Borujerd, Lorestan Province, Iraqi warplanes bombed seven residential areas at 06:15 GMT Thursday martyring 53 civilians and wounding 135 others. Several houses were also destroyed. It was the fifth Iraqi air attack on the city over the past two weeks.

In Doroud, Lorestan Province, 44 civilians were martyred, 130 others wounded and many houses destroyed in the Iraqi bombardment Thursday.

Khorramabad was the fourth city in Lorestan Province which was bombarded by Iraqi jet-fighters at 08:00 GMT Thursday as a result of which seven civilians were martyred and 75 others wounded. Also, several houses were destroyed or damaged in the attack.

In Pole Dokhtar, Lorestan Province, Six civilians were martyred and 40 others wounded in the first Iraqi air raid which occured at 08:30 GMT Thursday. There is yet no immediate report on the casualty toll in the second enemy air attack which took place Thursday afternoon.

Another savage Iraqi air attack on residential areas of Malayer, Hamedan Province, left 49 martyred and 150 others wounded Thursday. Six civilian areas were hit in the air raid which took place at 08:35 GMT.

The provincial capital city of Zanjan was bombed for the second time since the outbreak of the Iraqi-imposed war at 09:14 GMT Thursday. 30 Civilians were martyred and 65 others wounded. One mosque and two schools were damaged and several cars and buses set ablaze in the enemy bombing.

Iraqi warplanes bombed civilian areas of Tabriz, East Azarbayjan Province, at 11:15 GMT Thursday martyring seven persons and wounding seven others. Several houses and shops were also destroyed.

A yet-unknown number of civilians were martyred and wounded as Iraqi warplanes bombed residential areas of the southern city of Dezful, Khuzestan Province, three times Thursday.

There is yet no report available on the casualty toll of the Iraqi bombing of the Western Iranian city of Islamabad-e Gharb, Bakhtaran Province. Iraqi warplanes also opened fire on civilians at a boulevard in Nahavand, Hamedan Province, wounding two persons.

Fifteen civilians were martyred and 40 others wounded in the Iraqi air attack on Hamedan, the second consecutive in a day, at 12:50 GMT Thursday.

One villager was ounded when Iraqi jet fighters bombed areas around Babakan village in West Azarbaijan Province Thursday.

Meanwhile, the number of martyrs of Iraqi air raid on nomad tents around the western city of Ilam Wednesday rose to 27.

**Baghdad 'Targeted' by Missile**
*LD230752 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] In retaliation for the attacks by the Ba'thist Zionist criminals on the residential parts of our country, the missile unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Air Force at 2230 last night targeted one of the military-economic centers of Baghdad. The missile unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Air Force warned the Ba'thist Zionist Iraqi regime — which as the result of repeated defeats on the fronts resorts to bombing cities — that if they continue these aggressive acts they should expect

severe acts of revenge by the forces of Islam.

**Bombing of Iraq' Reported**
*LD230813 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*0430 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] According to the report of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, yesterday afternoon the military and economic installations in Miqdadiyah and Imadiyah were bombed by fighter-bombers of the Islamic Republic of Iran. All the aircraft returned safely to their bases.

Yesterday the high-flying pilots of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while providing close air cover for the fighters of Islam, twice bombed the positions, fortifications, and concentrations of the Zionist enemy in the Karbala'-5 offensive zone and returned safely to their bases.

According to the same report, most economic and military installations of the Zionist enemy alongside the Iran-Iraq border that are within the range of the long-range artillery of the Islamic Republic of Iran became targets for the fire of the fighters of Islam, and according to the reports that have been received, Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, Seyyed Sadiq, Halabjah, and Khormal in the northwest sector suffered damage and losses.

**New 'Thrust' in Karbala'-5**
*LD230839 Tehran IRNA in English 0805 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Karbala'-5 Operational Theater, Jan. 23, IRNA — In continuation of the victorious Karabala'-5 operations Iran's Muslim forces in a fresh thrust on the western bank of the Jasim River captured new positions Thursday night.

The Muslim forces of Iran heavily fought Iraqi troops in the Karbala'-5 operational theater Thursday night killing or wounding at least 2,000 enemy soldiers and capturing some others.

Iraqi Brigades numbers 238, 704 and 18 of the 11th Division and some units of the 10th Armoured Brigade suffered heavy casualties and losses in the fresh Iranian advance. The Muslim forces of Iran are now advancing towards their predetermined targets across the Jasim River in Shalamcheh region. Scores of Iraqi tanks and armoured personnel carriers together with 30 vehicles were destroyed and several others seized intact by the Iranian forces. The newly-captured Iraqi POWs are now being counted and transferred behind the fronts.

**3 More Iraqi Aircraft Downed**
*LD230845 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*0430 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] According to an IRNA report, three Iraqi aircraft which were planning to bomb the residential parts of Ahvaz yesterday were downed as the result of heavy antiaircraft fire from the fighters of Islam based in the Karbala'-5 operational zone. No report has been yet received about the fate of the pilots of those aircraft.

Thus, the total number of aircraft of the Zionist enemy which have been downed in the Karbala'-5 offensive zone has reached 58.

**Air Raid on Esfahan**
*LD230933 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*0430 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] According to the report of the Central News Unit, last night two residential parts of the city of Esfahan were attacked by aircraft of the Zionist enemy; as a result, one of our compatriots was martyred, and a number of others were wounded.

**Two Missiles Hit Basra**
*LD230943 Tehran IRNA in English 0919 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Jan. 23, IRNA — two mid-range surface-to-surface missiles were fired at economic and industrial centers of the southern Iraqi city of Basra Friday in retaliation for savage Iraqi air raids on residential areas of Iranian cities.

Heavy casualties and losses were inflicted on enemy in the Iranian missile attacks.

**2 Sumar Heights 'Liberated'**
*LD230946 Tehran IRNA in English 0922 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — Two strategic heights in Sumar operational theater in the western fronts were liberated in the latest assault launched by Iranian Muslim combatants Thursday night.

Heavy casualties and losses were inflicted on Seif al-Saddam (Saddam's sword) Brigade of Iraq's Presidential Guards in the Iranian thrust aimed at destroying the Iraqi war machine and capturing new positions.

Iran's Muslim forces smashed two heavy Iraqi counter-offensives until 06:00 hours local time (02:30 GMT) Friday inflicting substantial casualties and losses on enemy troops and forcing the others to retreat.

**Warplanes Hit Karbala'-6 Area**
*LD231058 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian*
*1030 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] At 1150 today Army Air Corps pilots pounded the Zionist enemy's positions and fortifications in the "Karbala'-6" operational theater. In the course of this action heavy damage was caused to bunkers, several tanks, and a number of armoured vehicles. Substantial casualties were also inflicted on enemy troops. After this action the Army Air Corps pilots returned safely to their bases.

### Communique No 20

*LD231135 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Communique No 20 of Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters, the center of joint operations of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was issued today as follows:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. There is neither strength nor might except through Allah, the high, the almighty [Koranic verse]:

Continuing their amazing epic-making actions, the mighty combatants of Islam continue to mount onslaughts on the feeble enemy and bring the gift of conspicuous victories for the Islamic ummah. Islamic ummah! Heroic and selfless nation! The forces of Islam attacked the forces of the Baghdad Zionist regime west of Jasim River last night. Having smashed through enemy positions they advanced in this area. They struck heavy blows and inflicted substantial losses on the enemy forces.

The combatants of Islam destroyed the 238th and 704th Brigades and the 18th Brigade of the 11th Division, as well as some units of the 10th Armored Brigade, killing or wounding more than 2,000 elements of those brigades and taking some of the enemy troops prisoner. In addition, 10 tanks and personnel carriers and 30 military vehicles were destroyed, and a number captured intact.

The mighty combatants of the army of monotheism, having carried out these operations and, having advanced deep inside enemy positions, are now reinforcing their new positions. With their fire on the troop concentrations of the forces of the Baghdad Zionist regime, the mighty combatants are depriving them of any opportunity for action.

In addition, the mighty warriors of the armed forces of Islam, continuing the operations in the "Karbala'-6" offensive, last night attacked enemy positions and liberated three sensitive heights north of Sumar and brought them under their full control. In these operations, the forces of Islam were able to strike heavy blows at and inflict heavy losses on the Sayf al-Saddam Brigade of the Iraqi Republican Guard Division, killing or wounding hundreds of them.

At present the combatants of the army of monotheism are repulsing last-ditch enemy efforts in the operational theater and reinforcing and stabilizing captured positions.

### Esfahan, Tabriz, Qom Bombed

*LD231201 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that aggressive Iraqi regime aircraft at 1225 and 1231 today, coinciding with Friday prayer sessions, bombed several residential areas in Esfahan and Tabriz. In addition, at 1229 the city of Qom became the target of an air raid by the Iraqi regime. Our correspondents report that the heroic citizens of these cities, who were taking part in unity-nurturing Friday prayers, demonstrated their firm determination to continue the struggle and to resist until final victory by shouting slogans. During the bombing raids they shouted such slogans as: War, war until victory.

The report says that on two occasions today the aggressive Iraqi regime attacked Baneh and its suburbs with artillery shells.

### Pilots 'Pound' Iraqi Positions

*LD231210 Tehran IRNA in English 1204 GMT 23 Jan 87*

[Text] Bakhtaran, Jan. 23, IRNA — Enemy positions and fortifications in Karbala'-6 operational theater were heavily pounded by Iran's Army Aviation (Havanriuz) pilots at 08:20 GMT Friday.

In this operation a considerable number of Iraqi troops were killed or wounded and heavy damage was inflicted on the enemy. Several tanks, personnel carriers and some other armored equipment of the enemy forces were also destroyed.

The helicopter pilots all returned to bases safely.